

25

TESTIMONIES

AGAINST

THE BIBLE

MOHAMMAD MANDURAH

2020

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First Printing, 2020

**In the Name of Allah,
The Most Merciful,
The Most Compassionate**

Other Books by the Author

- *Biblical Creation vs. Qur'anic Creation* (2020).
- *The Morality and Ethics of the Bible and the Qur'an*, Updated & Revised Edition (2021).

Note

Most of the Biblical references are taken from King James Version (KJV). Some are taken from other versions of the Bible, in which case, the versions are identified.

All Qur'anic references are taken from: M.T. Al-Hilali & M.M. Khan. *Translation of the Meanings of The Noble Qur'an in the English Language*, (2004).

Abbreviations

Chron.	Chronicles
Col.	Colossians
Cor.	Corinthians
Dan.	Daniel
Deut.	Deuteronomy
Eccles.	Ecclesiastes
Eph.	Ephesians
Ex.	Exodus
Ez.	Ezekiel
Gal.	Galatians
Gen.	Genesis
Hab.	Habakkuk
Heb.	Hebrews
Hos.	Hosea
Isa.	Isaiah
Jer.	Jeremiah
Josh.	Joshua
Judg.	Judges
Lam.	Lamentations
Lev.	Leviticus
Mal.	Malachi
Matt.	Matthew
Num.	Numbers
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
PBUH	Peace Be Upon Him
Philip.	Philippians
Prov.	Proverbs
Ps.	Psalms
Rev.	Revelation
Rom.	Romans
Sam.	Samuel
Song.	Song of Solomon

Thess.	Thessalonians
Tim.	Timothy
Zech.	Zechariah
Zeph.	Zephaniah

Preface

“Then woe to those who write the Book with their own hands and then say, “This is from Allah,” to purchase with it a little price! Woe to them for what their hands have written and woe to them for that they earn thereby.”

“And verily, among them is a party who distort the Book with their tongues (as they read), so that you may think it is from the Book, but it is not from the Book, and they say: “This is from Allah,” but it is not from Allah; and they speak a lie against Allah while they know it.”

Two verses from the Qur'an; the first is Verse 79 in Surah#2, Al-Baqarah, and the second is Verse 78 in Surah#3, Al-Imran. Both verses declare that the scripture of the-People-of-Book (the Jews and the Christians) was forged and corrupted. The forgeries and corruption took place both in the written documents and in the oral traditions. The Jews and Christians wrote their scripture with their hands and distorted it with their tongues and claimed that it was from God.

The above proclamation was a huge verdict that was announced in the early seventh century; i.e. 500 years before the biblical scholars of the middle ages in the West started questioning the credibility and authorship of the Bible. It precedes by 1200 years the conclusions of the biblical scholars of the early 19th century who finally reached the same verdict that indeed Moses did not write the Pentateuch, and that the Bible was written by more than 50 authors over a period that spans 1000 years, and that it is corrupted and contains many forgeries.

IT IS A MIRACLE!

To understand the miraculous nature of these Qur'anic verses, we need to look at the following brief chronology:

90 CE	Final canonization of the Hebrew Bible
405 CE	First translation of the Christian Bible from Greek into Latin (St. Jerome's Vulgate)
609-632 CE	Revelation of the Qur'an to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)
867 CE	The first Arabic Bible (Mt. Sinai Arabic Codex 151)
1526 CE	First translation of the Bible into English (William Tyndale's Pentateuch)
1611 CE	King James (Authorized) Version of the Bible

From the above, we can see that when the Qur'an was being revealed to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in the early seventh century, there was no Arabic version of the Bible. There were only Hebrew, Greek and Latin versions.

Most of the Arabs at that time were illiterate; very few of them could read or write even their own language. It was impossible for anyone of them to have access to the Bible and to read it in Hebrew, Greek or Latin. Biblical scholars did not exist at that time. Yet, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), reciting the above verses, described exactly how the Bible was forged and corrupted.

Over several centuries before the rise of Islam, many Jewish tribes migrated and settled among the Arabs at Yathrib, an oasis located about 450 km north of Mecca. They settled there because it was written in their Holy Book that a prophet will appear around that time as the last prophet from God to humanity. They hoped that this prophet will be chosen from amongst them.

The pagan Arabs at that time used to revere the Jews for they possess a Holy Book. They believed that the Jews are in a class by themselves because their Holy Book contains the revelation from the

Creator, the laws and teachings from God, the knowledge about the past and what to expect in the hereafter.

And, indeed, a prophet was chosen and sent as the last prophet from God to humanity. Unfortunately to the Jews and to their dismay, Prophet Muhammad was not chosen from amongst them, he was chosen from the Arabs, the descendants of Ishmael (First born son of Abraham.) This did not sit well with the Jews, and they denied and rejected the new prophet and the new religion.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) mission started in 609 CE when he was 40 years old and continued for 23 years until his death in 632 CE. The Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet over the same period. Naturally, and as would be expected, a competition arose between the Muslims and the Jews as to which of the two scriptures is the true authentic word of God, the Qur'an or the Torah?

And the verdict came from God Himself. The Bible is not authentic; it is not credible; it is forged and corrupted.

In this book we review the testimonies of 25 expert witnesses against the Bible. All the witnesses are from the West. They have different backgrounds: biblical scholars, clergy, academicians, scientists, and free thinkers.

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Introduction:

Biblical criticism has made a huge progress over the last two hundred years. Among biblical scholars, many of the questions about the Bible have been answered and many of the issues that were controversial before have been settled. These include:

- The Bible's Authorship. No respectable biblical scholar now believe that Moses authored the Pentateuch, or that the Gospels were written by any of the Twelve Apostles.
- That the Bible is corrupted with errors and contradictions.
- That the Bible is inaccurate and unreliable as a source of history, and has its roots in myths, legends and folklore.

Yet, what the biblical scholars have acknowledged and accepted about the Bible is not necessarily what is being disseminated among the public. Most of the results of the research on the Bible is still confined between the biblical scholars and is not easily accessible by the public.

The aim of this book is to bring out to the public the latest knowledge about the Bible. A novel approach is adopted here in which the Bible is imagined to be under trial in a court of justice. The articles of indictment are grouped into three lawsuits:

Case 1: Criticism of the Bible's Authorship.

The Charges are: (1) that the authors of the different books of the Bible are not whom they are claimed to be (Moses did not write the Pentateuch, Matthew Gospel was not written by Matthew, etc.), and (2) that most of the authors of the Bible are anonymous.

Case 2: Criticism of the Bible's Integrity.

The Charges are: (1) that the Bible was corrupted intentionally, (2) that parts of the Bible were forged, (3) that the Bible was further corrupted unintentionally by the scribes as it was transmitted to us, and (4) and the Bible is mostly a collection of myths and legends.

Case 3: Criticism of the Bible's Morality.

The Charges are: (1) that the Bible is morally deficient, (2) that the Bible sanctions and promotes immoral behavior and activities.

The book presents testimonies from renowned witnesses (scholars) in the three open lawsuits against the Bible. The testimony of each witness is in the form of a published book.

Some of these books have multiple authors. In such cases, our witness is the first author of the book. Almost all the books include tens of references, and many of the books contain external testimonies from a host of biblical scholars. This in effects means that each testimony represents, not one witness, but the many scholars who put their opinions in the book.

The testimonies are presented in a chronological order; the oldest goes first. The first one is from Abraham Ibn Ezra (1089-1164) from the Middle Ages. His testimony is a book entitled: *The Commentary of Abraham Ibn Ezra on the Pentateuch* and is dated 1164.

Here is a full list of our witnesses (authors) and their books:

#	Author	Book Title	Date
1	Ibn Ezra, A.	The Commentary of Abraham Ibn Ezra on the Pentateuch	1164
2	Spinoza, B.	Theological-Political Treatise	1670
3	Newton, I.	An Historical Account of Two Corruptions of Scripture	1754
4	Horne, T.H.	Popery, the Enemy and the Falsifier of Scripture	1844

#	Author	Book Title	Date
5	De Wette, W.M.	A Critical and Historical Introduction to the Canonical Scripture of the Old Testament	1850
6	Colenso, J.W.	The Pentateuch and Book of Joshua Critically Examined	1862
7	Doane, T.W.	Bible Myths and Their Parallels in Other Religions	1882
8	Ingersoll, R.G.	Some Mistakes of Moses	1889
9	Gladden, W.	Who Wrote the Bible? A Book for the People	1891
10	Stanton, E.C.	The Woman's Bible, Parts I & II	1895
11	Burgon, J.W.	The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels	1896
12	Hull, M.	Our Bible: Who Wrote It? When-Where-How? Is It Infallible?	1900
13	Remsburg, J.E.	The Bible. Authenticity, Credibility, Morality	1907
14	West, E.S.	Impeachment of the Bible	1923
15	Sunderland, J.T.	Origin and Character of the Bible	1924
16	Wheless, J.	Forgery in Christianity	1930
17	Ehrman, B.D.	The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture	1993
18	Kirsch, J.	Harlot by the Side of the Road; Forbidden Tales of the Bible	1997
19	Dundes, A.	Holy Writ as Oral Lit; The Bible as Folklore	1999
20	Thompson, T.L.	The Mythic Past	1999
21	Friedman, R.E.	Who Wrote the Bible?	2011
22	Ehrman, B.D.	FORGED; Writing in the Name of God-Why the Bible's Authors are not Who We Think They Are	2011
23	Wells, S.	Drunk with Blood. God's Killings in the Bible	2013
24	Muller, R.	Evidence of Editing. Growth and Change of Texts in the Hebrew Bible	2014
25	Morrow, J.L.	Three Skeptics and the Bible; Le Peyrère, Hobbes, Spinoza, and the Reception of Modern Biblical Criticism	2016

The pool from which our witnesses are chosen contains hundreds of qualified scholars. The selected witnesses are of different backgrounds: biblical scholars, clergy, academicians, scientists, and free thinkers. But they all share one common characteristics: they are all Westerners.

Many of our witnesses are Christian clergy belonging to different sects: Catholics, Protestants or Unitarians.

The witnesses are carefully selected to ensure that the dates of their testimonies cover an extended range:

- 3 from the pre 19th century period,
- 8 from the 19th century,
- 9 from the 20th century, and
- 5 from the current century

Note that in the following testimonies, I often use the label '**Author**' to refer to the expert witness who is giving his testimony; i.e. the author of the book being reviewed.

Testimony #1: Ibn Ezra - The Commentary of Abraham Ibn Ezra on the Pentateuch (1164).

The Author: **Abraham Ibn Ezra** (1089-1164) was born in Tudela in Spain during its golden age under the Muslims' rule. He later moved to Cordoba and claimed it to be his place of birth. He is considered one of the most distinguished Jewish biblical commentators and philosophers of the Middle Ages.¹

The Book: *The Complete Commentary on the Torah* (1164).

In his commentary on the Pentateuch, Ibn Ezra was troubled by several verses in the Torah that didn't make sense or/and seemed not to be written by Moses but were added to the Torah. These are: Gen. 12:6, Gen. 22:14, Deut. 1:1-5, Deut. 3:11, Deut. 31:9, and Deut. 34:1-12.

In Genesis 12:6, we read:

6. And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. (Gen. 12:6) KJV.

Commenting on the above verse, Ibn Ezra wrote:

“... AND THE CANAANITE WAS THEN IN THE LAND. It is possible that the Canaanites seized the land of Canaan from some other tribe at that time. Should this interpretation be incorrect, then there is a secret meaning to the text. Let the one who understands it remain silent.”²

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham_ibn_Ezra

² Strickman & Silver (Trs.) (1988) - *Ibn Ezra's Commentary on the Pentateuch Genesis (Bereshit)*, p. 151.

In the above, ibn Ezra is engaged in what we would now call 'biblical criticism'. Ibn Ezra concern is how could [the Torah] use the word "then" in this context, which implies that [the Canaanites were there] then but that they are there now. But didn't Moses write the Torah and in his time the Canaanites ruled the land? It makes no sense for Moses to write "then," for reason dictates that the word "then" could only have been written at a time when the Canaanites were not occupying the land, and we know that the Canaanites were not removed from the land until after Moses' death during the conquest of Joshua. According to this, Moses did not write that word here, rather Joshua or one of the later prophets wrote it.³

However, ibn Ezra's language is veiled and allusive, rather than direct. He didn't expose that 'Moses did not write this verse', and he wrote: "... *there is a secret meaning to the text...*" This probably could be out of reverence for the holy writings.⁴

Regarding the other problematic verses in Genesis and Deuteronomy, Ibn Ezra famously stated:

"If you can grasp the mystery behind the following problematic passages:

- 1) *The final twelve verses of this book [i.e., Deut. 34:1–12, describing the death of Moses],*
- 2) *'Moshe wrote [this song on the same day, and taught it to the children of Israel]' [Deut. 31:22];*
- 3) *'At that time, the Canaanites dwelt in the land' [Gen. 12:6];*
- 4) *'... In the mountain of God, He will appear' [Gen. 22:14];*
- 5) *'behold, his [Og king of Bashan] bed is a bed of iron...' [Deut. 3:11]*

³ <https://www.thetorah.com/article/seven-torah-passages-of-non-mosaic-origin-according-to-ibn-ezra-and-r-joseph-bonfils>

⁴ Lancaster (2003) - *Deconstructing the Bible...*, p. 7.

*you will then understand the truth.*⁵

In the above, Ibn Ezra was using an encrypted language ("the truth") to indicate that Moses was not the sole author of the Torah.

Finally, we look at the twelve verses of Ch. 34, the last chapter in Deuteronomy, that describe the death of Moses and what happened after that:

1. *Then Moses climbed Mount Nebo from the plains of Moab to the top of Pisgah, across from Jericho. There the Lord showed him the whole land—from Gilead to Dan,*
2. *all of Naphtali, the territory of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the Mediterranean Sea,*
3. *the Negev and the whole region from the Valley of Jericho, the City of Palms, as far as Zoar.*
4. *Then the Lord said to him, "This is the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob when I said, 'I will give it to your descendants.' I have let you see it with your eyes, but you will not cross over into it."*
5. *And Moses the servant of the Lord died there in Moab, as the Lord had said.*
6. *He buried him in Moab, in the valley opposite Beth Peor, but to this day no one knows where his grave is.*
7. *Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died, yet his eyes were not weak, nor his strength gone.*
8. *The Israelites grieved for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days, until the time of weeping and mourning was over.*
9. *Now Joshua son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on him. So, the Israelites listened to him and did what the Lord had commanded Moses.*

⁵ *The Commentary of Abraham Ibn Ezra on the Pentateuch. Volume 5: Deuteronomy, pp. 1-2.*

10. *Since then, no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face,*
11. *who did all those signs and wonders the Lord sent him to do in Egypt—to Pharaoh and to all his officials and to his whole land.*
12. *For no one has ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deeds that Moses did in the sight of all Israel. (Deut. 34:1-12)*

And it is evident that Moses couldn't be the author of the above verses that describe his own death. Ibn Ezra developed what he calls the "secret of the twelve." Since these twelve verses were not written by Moses, then there are other passages that Moses did not write. But he decided to keep it a secret because most people at his time could not or would not accept this idea.

Exposing Ibn Ezra "encrypted" conclusion that Moses was not the sole author of the Pentateuch, Spinoza wrote the following:

*"Here are Ibn Ezra's words from his commentary on Deuteronomy: "Beyond the Jordan etc.": If you understand the mystery of the twelve and of "Moses wrote the Law" and "the Canaanite was then in the land" and "it will be revealed on the mountain of God" and also "behold his bed, a bed of iron", then you will know **the truth**'. In these few words he discloses and, at the same time, demonstrates that **it was not actually Moses who wrote the Pentateuch but some other person** who lived much later, and that the book Moses wrote was a different work."*⁶

In the above, Spinoza was more explicit in saying what Ibn Ezra couldn't say, that Moses didn't write the Pentateuch, and that it was written by another person.

⁶ Israel (2007) - Benedict De Spinoza ..., 2007, p. 119.

Testimony #2: Spinoza - Theological-Political Treatise (1670).

The Author: **Baruch Spinoza** (1632-1677)⁷. A Dutch philosopher of Portuguese Sephardi origin, and one of the early thinkers of the Enlightenment and modern biblical criticism. He developed highly controversial ideas regarding the authenticity of the Hebrew Bible and the nature of the Divine. Jewish religious authorities issued a herem against him, causing him to be effectively expelled and shunned by Jewish society at age 23, including by his own family. His books were later added to the Catholic Church's Index of Forbidden Books.

The Book: *Theological-Political Treatise* (1670).⁸ [or, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (TTP)].

The immediate aim of Spinoza in writing the TTP was to strengthen individual freedom and widen liberty of thought in Dutch society, in particular by weakening ecclesiastical authority and lowering the status of theology.⁹ The TTP offers a comprehensive theory of what religion is and how ecclesiastical authority and theological concepts exercise their power over men while, at the same time, providing a new method of Bible exegesis.¹⁰

In this testimony, we shall focus on Spinoza's opinions regarding the authorship of books of the Old Testament (OT). It should be noted here that Spinoza was a great admirer of Abraham ibn Ezra, and that ibn Ezra's commentary on the Pentateuch had a great influence on the TTP.

⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baruch_Spinoza

⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tractatus_Theologico-Politicus

⁹ Israel (2007) - *Benedict De Spinoza* ..., p. viii.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. ix.

On the Pentateuch, and after a short analysis in Ch. 8 of TTP, Spinoza concluded that Moses was not its author:

*"From all this it is plainer than the noonday sun that the Pentateuch was not written by Moses but by someone else who lived many generations after Moses. But now we should perhaps consider the books cited in the Pentateuch which Moses himself did write."*¹¹

He suggests that Moses wrote a different book entitled "*The Book of the Law*":

"It is evident finally that in the fortieth year after the exodus from Egypt Moses expounded all the laws he had made (see Deuteronomy 1.5), and renewed the people's commitment to them (see Deuteronomy 29.14); he then wrote a book which contained the laws he had set out and the 123 new covenant (see Deuteronomy 31.9). This book was entitled 'The Book of the Law of God' and is the book that Joshua subsequently expanded by adding the account of the people's renewal of the covenant again in his day, when they entered into covenant with God for the third time (see Joshua 24.25-6). But since we have no book extant which contains this covenant of Moses and the covenant of Joshua together, we must concede that it has perished ...

*We hence conclude that this Book of the Law of God which Moses wrote, was not the Pentateuch, but an entirely different work which the author of the Pentateuch inserted at an appropriate place in his own work."*¹²

In Spinoza's opinion, several other books in the Bible were not written by those who were claimed to be their authors. One of these books is the Book of Joshua which was not written by Joshua:

"For similar reasons, the Book of Joshua also can be shown not to have been written by Joshua. It is another person who testifies that Joshua's

¹¹ Ibid, p. 122.

¹² Ibid, p. 123.

fame had spread throughout the earth (see 6.27), that he omitted none of the commandments of Moses (see the last verse of Ch.8 and Ch. 11.15), that he grew old, that he summoned them all to an assembly, and finally that he died. Then too some things are told that happened after his death, for example, that after his death the Israelites worshipped God as long as the old men who knew him remained alive. It is said at 16.10 that Ephraim and Manasseh 'did not drive out the Canaanite that dwelt in Gezer, but' (it adds) 'the Canaanite has dwelt in the midst of Ephraim to this day and has paid them tribute'.”¹³

And the Book of Judges was not composed by the Judges themselves:

“No sensible person, I believe, is persuaded that the Book of Judges was composed by the Judges themselves. For the summary of this whole history given in chapter 2 clearly proves that it was written entirely by one narrator alone. Moreover, it was undoubtedly written after the kings assumed the government, since its author often reminds us that ‘in those days’ there was no king in Israel.”¹⁴

The Book of Samuel cannot be written by Samuel for it was composed many generations after Samuel:

“As for the books of Samuel, there is no reason to tarry long as the narrative continues far beyond his lifetime. Here, I would merely want to note that this book too was composed many generations after Samuel. For in 1 Samuel 9.9 the narrator mentions in parenthesis, ‘In the old days each man spoke thus in Israel when he went to consult God: ‘Come, let us go to the seer’; for he who today is called a prophet was in the old days designated a seer’.”¹⁵

¹³ Ibid, p. 125.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 125.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 126.

And the books of the Kings were excerpted from the books of the 'Acts of Solomon.'¹⁶

Then, Spinoza gives his opinion on who was the author of all these books; he suspects that the author was Ezra:

*"These three things, hence, taken together, namely unity of theme in all these books, their interconnectedness, and their being derivative works written many centuries after the event, lead us to conclude, as we said above, that they were all composed by a single historian. Who this was, I cannot conclusively prove, though I suspect it was Ezra himself?"*¹⁷

And here is Spinoza's opinion on the remaining books of the OT:

The books of I Chronicles: were composed long after Ezra, perhaps even after Judas Maccabeus had restored the Temple.¹⁸

The Psalms: were collected and divided into five books in the period of the Second Temple.¹⁹

The Proverbs of Solomon: were collected at the time of King Josiah.²⁰

The book of Daniel: from chapter 8 on, consists of writings by Daniel himself. The source of the first seven chapters is unknown since they were composed in Chaldaic (except chapter 1.)²¹

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 126.

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 127.

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 144.

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 144.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 145.

²¹ Ibid, p. 148.

The books Daniel, Ezra, Esther and Nehemiah: were written by the same author, though he is unknown. It is certain, however, these books were not written either by Ezra or Nehemiah.²²

Spinoza then records his conclusion on the books of the OT in the following:

*"Our conclusion is evident: no canon of sacred books ever existed before the time of the Maccabees. The books we now possess were selected, in preference to many others, by the Second Temple Pharisees who also set out the forms for prayers, and these have been accepted purely as a consequence of their decisions. Hence, those who seek to demonstrate the authority of Holy Scripture must prove the authority of each individual book. It is insufficient to demonstrate the divine character of just one book, if one wishes to prove the divinity of all. Otherwise we would be obliged to suppose that the council of the Pharisees could not have erred in their selection of books, and no one will ever demonstrate that."*²³

Spinoza's Political Views:

Spinoza have some interesting and unique political views in TTP that deserve deep reflection. Here we look at some of these views as a collection of snippets.

- The Hebrews were called God's chosen people only because God has chosen for them a certain strip of territory, where they might live peaceably and at ease.²⁴
- The Law revealed by God to Moses was merely the law of the individual Hebrew state, therefore that it was binding

²² Ibid, p. 149.

²³ Ibid, p. 153.

²⁴ Elwes (Tr.) (1670) - Benedict De Spinoza. *Tractus Theologico-Politicus*, p. 8.

on none but Hebrews, and not even on Hebrews after the downfall of their nation.²⁵

- The sacred books speak very inaccurately of God, attributing to Him hands, feet, eyes, ears, a mind, and motion from one place to another; or that they ascribe to Him emotions, such as jealousy, mercy, &c., or, lastly, that they describe Him as a Judge in heaven sitting on a royal throne with Christ on His right hand. Such expressions are adapted to the understanding of the multitude, it being the object of the Bible to make men not learned but obedient.²⁶
- The Bible is useless as a source of knowledge—at least for those who can reason philosophically. Biblical narratives may sometimes illustrate moral precepts, such as justice and charity, but unaided reason can discover these virtues as well, without recourse to revelation (and with more certainty).²⁷

²⁵ Ibid, p. 8.

²⁶ Ibid, p. 180.

²⁷ <https://www.libertarianism.org/columns/freethought-freedom-spinoza-bible>

Testimony #3: Newton - An Historical Account of Two Corruptions of Scripture. In a Letter to a Friend (1754).

The Author: **Sir Isaac Newton** (1642-1726/27) was an English mathematician, physicist, astronomer, theologian, and author who is widely recognized as one of the most influential scientists of all time and as a key figure in the scientific revolution.²⁸

The Testimony: A letter that was sent to John Locke on 14 November 1690. The text of the letter was first published in English in 1754, 27 years after Newton's death. There are several books that discuss this letter^{29, 30}.

The first corruption exposed by Newton was regarding the verse 1 John 5:7. In KJV Bible, we read:

7. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. (1 John 5:7).

Regarding the above verse, Newton presents detailed argument to prove that the words "in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one", that support the Trinity doctrine, did not appear in the original Greek Scriptures, but was added to it intentionally at a later date.

The other corruption that Newton investigated is in (1 Timothy 3:16):

²⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isaac_Newton

²⁹ Sparks (1823) - In A Collection of Essays and Tracts in Theology, from Various Authors, with Biographical and Critical Notices, by Jared Sparks, No. IV, Vol. 2, Part 2 (O. Everett, Boston, 1823), pp. 235-320.

³⁰ In *the Correspondence of Isaac Newton*, ed. H. W. Turnbull (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), Vol. 3, pp. 83-146.

*16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness:
God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of
angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world,
received up into glory. (1 Tim. 3:16).*

Regarding the above verse, Newton argued that, by a small alteration in the Greek text, the word "God" was substituted to make the phrase read "God was manifest in the flesh" instead of "which was manifested in the flesh". He attempted to demonstrate that early Church writers in referring to the verse knew nothing of such an alteration.

Here are Newton's conclusions:³¹

"XXIV. I have now given you an account of the corruption of the text: the sum of which is this. The difference between the Greek of the Ancient Versions puts it past dispute, that either the Greeks have corrupted their MSS, or the Latins Syrians & Ethiopians their Versions. And it's more reasonable to lay the fault upon the Greeks than upon the other three, for these considerations. It was easier for one nation to do it than for three to conspire. It was easier to change a Letter or two in the Greek than six words in the Latin. In the Greek the sense is obscure, in the Versions clear. It was agreeable to the Interest of the Greeks to make the change; but against the Interest of the three nations to do it: and men are never false to their interest. The Greek reading was unknown in the times of the Arian controversy; but that of the Versions, then in use amongst both Greeks & Latins. Some Greek MSS render the Greek reading dubious; but those of the Versions hitherto collated agree. There are no signs of corruption in the versions hitherto discovered: but in the Greek we have shewed you particularly when, on what occasion, & by whom, the text was corrupted.

³¹ Sparks (1823), pp. 318-320

XXV. *I know not whether it be worth the while to tell you, that in the printed works of Athanasius there is an Epistle, De Incarnatione Verbi, which reads Θεὸς. For this Epistle relates to the Nestorian heresy, & so was written by a much later author than Athanasius, & may also possibly have been since corrected, like the works of Chrysostom & Cyril, by the corrected text of St. Pauls Epistles. I have had so short a time to run my eye over Authors, that I cannot tell whether upon further search, more passages about this falsation may not hereafter occurr pertinent to the argument. But if there should, I presume it will not be difficult, now the falsation is thus far laid open, to know what construction to put upon them, & how to apply them."*

“XXVI. *You see what freedom I have used in this discourse, & I hope you will interpret it candidly. For if the ancient Churches in debating & deciding the greatest mysteries of religion, knew nothing of these two texts; I understand not, why we should be so fond of them, now the debates are over. And whilst it's the character of an honest man to be pleased, & of a man of interest to be troubled at the detection of frauds, & of both to run most in to those passions when the detection is made plainest: I hope this letter will to one of your integrity prove so much the more acceptable, as it makes a further discovery than you have hitherto met with in Commentators.*”

Newton was very convincing in his arguments regarding those two corruptions. Today most versions of the Bible omit the phrase (“the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost”) from verse (1 John 5:7) or retain it as only a marginal reading. Below we show again how the verse originally appeared in KJV, and how it now appears in the modern Bibles - the New International Version (NIV), the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), the New American Bible (Revised Edition) (NABRE), the New Living Translation (NLT), and the American Standard Version (ASV):

7. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. (1 John 5:7) KJV.

7. For there are three that testify: (1 John 5:7) NIV

7. There are three that testify: (1 John 5:7) NRSV

7. So there are three that testify, (1 John 5:7) NABRE

7. So we have these three witnesses — (1 John 5:7) NLT

7. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth. (1 John 5:7) ASV

As for (1 Timothy 3:16), most of the modern versions of the Bible remove the word “God” and put in its place the word “He”, or “Christ”. Here how this verse appears in the (NIV), (NRSV), (NABRE), (NLT), and (ASV) Bibles:

16. Beyond all question, the mystery from which true godliness springs is great: He appeared in the flesh, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory. (1 Tim. 3:16)
NIV

16. Without any doubt, the mystery of our religion is great: He was revealed in flesh, vindicated in spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among Gentiles, believed in throughout the world, taken up in glory (1 Tim. 3:16) NRSV

16. Undeniably great is the mystery of devotion, Who was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed to the Gentiles, believed in throughout the world, taken up in glory. (1 Tim. 3:16) NABRE

16. Without question, this is the great mystery of our faith: Christ was revealed in a human body and vindicated by the Spirit. He was seen by angels and announced to the nations. He was believed in throughout the world and taken to heaven in glory. (1 Tim. 3:16) NLT

16. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness; He who was manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, received up in glory. (1 Tim. 3:16) ASV

Testimony #4: Horne - Popery, the Enemy and the Falsifier of Scripture ... (1844).

The Author: **Thomas Hartwell Horne** (1780-1862). He was an English Theologian and Librarian. Horne was initially affiliated with the Wesleyans but later joined the Church of England.³²

The Book: *Popery, the Enemy and the Falsifier of Scripture, or, Facts and Evidences, Illustrative of the Conduct of the Modern Church of Rome in Prohibiting the Reading and Circulation of the Holy Scriptures in the Vulgar Tongue*, New Edition, William Edward Painter, London, (1845).

The word “Popery”, that appears in the title of the book, is an archaic word in the English language for Roman Catholicism, historically used by Protestants and Anglicans to label their Roman Catholic opponents, who differed from them in accepting the authority of the Pope over the Christian Church. The word is now recognized as pejorative, despite having been in widespread neutral use in Protestant and Anglican writings until the mid-nineteenth century, including in some laws that remain in force in the United Kingdom.³³

Horne starts this book by denouncing the Papacy and the Church of Rome efforts to suppress the circulation of the Bible:

“In the year 1229, during the pontificate of Gregory IX, a council was held at Toulouse, in which, besides various enactments against those who were denounced as heretic, and also against those princes who did not extirpate all heretics out of their dominions, the laity are, by the thirteenth

³² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Hartwell_Horne

³³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Popery_and_Papism

*canon, prohibited from having the books of the Old or New Testament, unless any one, out of devotion, should wish to have a psalter, or a breviary for the divine offices, or the Hours of the Blessed Mary. But they are most strictly forbidden to have these books in the vulgar tongue."*³⁴

He gives a full history of the Papacy's efforts to suppress the circulation of the Bible over a period of 500 years until the mid. 19th century:

*"The latest fulmination against the Scriptures was hurled by the present Pontiff, Gregory XVI., in a bull dated so recently as the day after the nones of May (that is. May 8th), 1844. Having denounced the circulation of the Scriptures by the Bible Societies, and referred to the decrees of the Council of Trent, as well as to the prohibitions of preceding Popes against reading the Scriptures, ..."*³⁵

And then, he proceeds to expose the Papacy and Church of Rome efforts to falsify the Bible and promote a corrupted version of it. This includes publishing two editions of the Latin Vulgate (the Sixtine Bible and the Clementine Bible) that differed from each other in more than two thousand variances:

"There are two celebrated editions of the Latin Vulgate version (in which the apocryphal books are intermingled with the canonical books), published by two infallible pontiffs, between which the most grave and conflicting variations and contradictions are to be found, viz., the Sixtine and the Clementine editions. The Sixtine Bible (as it is commonly termed), was published at Rome in 1590. In a bull prefixed to it, Sixtus V. declared that this edition should, without hesitation, be deemed and taken for that which the Council of Trent, in its fourth session, had pronounced to be authentic ; and ordained that it should be adopted throughout the Romish Church.

³⁴ Horne (1844) - *Popery*, ..., p. 10.

³⁵ Ibid, pp. 27-28.

*But, notwithstanding the labours bestowed on this edition by the Pope, it was discovered to be so exceedingly incorrect, that his successor, Gregory XIV., caused it to be suppressed: and Clement VIII., who succeeded Gregory in the pontificate, published another authentic edition of the Vulgate, called from him the Clementine edition. In the preface to this edition, it is asserted to be the ancient and vulgate edition of the Bible. This edition differed more than any other from that of Sixtus V. These fatal variances between editions alike promulgated by pontiffs, arrogating to themselves infallibility, did not escape detection: and our learned countryman, Thomas James, in 1600, published his "Bellum Papale sive Concordia Discors Sixti Quinti et dementis Octavi, circa Hieronymianam Editionem." In this work not fewer than two thousand additions, omissions, contradictions, and other differences between the Sixtine and Clementine editions, are pointed out."*³⁶

The French Catholics played their parts also in falsifying the Bible. One of these efforts is the publication of the Bordeaux New Testament in 1686 on the orders of Louis XIV. The Author then brings in the testimony of Dr. Kidder, Bishop of Bath and Wells, who in 1690 published a book that exposes 136 texts, that are either altered, added, or omitted, or are inconsistencies and typographical errors in the Bordeaux New Testament.³⁷

The French Catholics efforts to falsify the Bible was not only through the Bordeaux New Testament, but these falsification were also found in a French version of the New Testament, published by Francis Veron, in 1646.³⁸

³⁶ Ibid, pp. 78-79.

³⁷ Ibid, p. 85.

³⁸ Ibid, p. 93.

Ample examples are given to demonstrate the errors and falsifications in both the Bordeaux New Testament and the Veron New Testament.

The Author then exposes the falsifications introduced into the Anglo-Romish version of the New Testament, that was first published at Rheims in 1582. Several editions of this Bible were published. The falsifications examples listed below refer to the edition published at Dublin, in 1825:³⁹

- i. The verb '*to repent*', occurs thirty-four times in the Greek Testament. In Mark i. 15, Luke xvii. 4, and Rev. ii. 21, it is correctly translated '*repent*'; and in Acts ii. 19, it is translated by the nearly equivalent words - '*be penitent*.' But in all the other passages it is falsely rendered '*do penance*'
- ii. The word '*repentance*' is found twenty times in the New Testament. In nineteen passages in the Rheims edition it is falsely translated '*penance*'.
- iii. '*an elder*,' occurs sixty-six times. In six instances (Acts xiv. 22 and xv. 2, 1 Tim. v. 17 and 19, Tit. i. 5, and James v. 14), it is rendered '*priest*,' in order to answer the purposes of the Church of Rome.
- iv. '*presbytery*' which occurs three times in the New Testament, is, in 1 Tim. iv. 14, rendered '*priesthood*'.
- v. '*mystery*' is translated '*sacrament*' in Eph. V. 32 in order to support the Romish tenet, that marriage is a sacrament.

³⁹ Ibid, pp. 102-105.

Testimony #5: De Wette - A Critical and Historical Introduction to the Canonical Scripture of the Old Testament (1850).

The Author: **Wilhelm Martin Leberecht De Wette** (1780-1849) was a German theologian and biblical scholar.⁴⁰

The Book: *A Critical and Historical Introduction to the Canonical Scripture of the Old Testament* (in Two Volumes), 2e, Charles C. Little and James Brown (1850). It was written in German in 1817 and translated into English by Theodore Parker in 1843.

The book falls into 2 volumes, and is, perhaps, one of the earliest comprehensive studies in the field of “Biblical Criticism” of the Old Testament (OT). An outline of the content of the book may give us a better idea about the uniqueness of this effort and its comprehensiveness since it was first published in German in the early 19th century.

Volume I is composed of the following Parts, Books, and Chapters:

- Introduction.
- Part I - Of the Bible-Collection in General.
 - Book I - Name, Constituent Portions, Order, and Division of the Bible.
 - Book II - History of the Origin of the Collection of Scripture; or, History of the Canon (2 chapters).
- Part II - General Introduction to the Canonical Books of the Old Testament.
 - Book I - On the Original Language of the Old Testament.

⁴⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilhelm_Martin_Leberecht_de_Wette

- Book II - On the Versions of the Old Testament (3 chapters.)
- Book III - On the Criticism of the Text (2 Divisions, 4 Chapters.)
- Appendix.

Volume II is composed of the following Parts, Books, and Chapters:

- Part III - Particular Introduction to the Canonical Books of the Old Testament.
- Book I - Theocratical-Historical Books
 - Ch. I - Books of Moses
 - Ch. II - The Book of Joshua
 - Ch. III - The Book of Judges
 - Ch. IV - The Book of Samuel
 - Ch. V - The Books of the Kings
 - Ch. VI - Books of the Chronicles
 - Ch. VII - The Book of Ruth
 - Ch. VIII - The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah
 - Ch. IX - The Book of Esther
- Book II - The Theocratical Inspired Books
 - Ch. I - Isaiah
 - Ch. II - Jeremiah
 - Ch. III - Ezekiel
 - Ch. IV - The Twelve Minor Prophets
 - Ch. V - Daniel
- Book III - Poetical Books
 - Ch. I - Psalms
 - Ch. II - The Lamentations
 - Ch. III - The Songs of Solomon
 - Ch. IV - The Proverbs of Solomon
 - Ch. V - Ecclesiastes, or The Preacher
 - Ch. VI - The Book of Job

In this review of the book we bypass Vol. I that covers the introductory and history parts of the study and go directly to Vol. II that gives the analysis and criticism of each book in the OT.

In general, each book is analyzed along the following issues:

- General overview of the book.
- Contents of the book.
- Peculiarities of the narrative.
- Origin of the documents.
- Authenticity and credibility of the documents.
- Authorship.
- Dating of authorship.

As an example of the analysis of the authenticity and credibility of the books of the OT, here what the Author writes about Isaiah:

*"The whole of the second part of the collection of oracles under Isaiah's name (xl.-lxvi.) is spurious. It contains discourses designed to console and admonish the people, then in captivity, and promises their return to their native land, and the restoration of the state."*⁴¹

*"The passage (xiii. 1-xiv. 23) which treats of the destruction of Babel and the Babylonian empire by the Medes, and of the return of the exiles, must be pronounced spurious, and for the same reason as the last part of the book, - which is probably the work of the same author, - because the writer takes his standpoint in the exile."*⁴²

*"We must consider chap. xxxiv. xxxv. as spurious, which treat of the devastation of Edom, and the return of the exiles. We are enabled to fix the date of these by the following considerations: By the parallel passages in Obadiah, Jeremiah, (xl ix. 7, sqq.,) Ezekiel, (xxv. 12, sqq.,) and Isaiah, (lxiii. 1-6.)"*⁴³

⁴¹ Ibid, Vol. II, p. 366.

⁴² Ibid, Vol. II, pp. 373-374.

⁴³ Ibid, Vol. II, pp. 374-375.

"The spurious passages also - in particular, xiii. xiv. xl.-lxvi. - deserve great praise on account of their lively and flowing style, - which is sometimes lyric, - (lxiii. 7-lxiv. 12,) and of their beautiful and often sublime thoughts, (xl. 15-17, Iv. 8, 9, and lxvi. 1, 2.)"⁴⁴

Similar analysis is carried out to every other book in the OT. The contradictions, historical errors, and forgeries are documented with the evidence to each incidence. In each case valuable use of external testimonies is secured. We shall not go more into the analysis of the authenticity and credibility of the OT for it takes too much space.

We turn our focus in the following to the issues of authorship and date of each book of the OT. Only, the opinion of the Author is quoted below without going into the details of the analysis and the evidence in each case.

The Pentateuch:

I- The Document Elohim:

"... Consequently, it is probable the document Elohim was written in the time of Samuel or Saul, [that is, about 1120, or 1055, B.C., or about four hundred years after Moses.] This is the conclusion of Stahelin, Bleek, and Tuch."⁴⁵

II- The Jehovistic Documents:

"... they were composed after the death of Moses ... These fragments are written considerable time after the Elohistic documents; after Saul's victory over the Amalekites, ... after David's victory over the Edomites and Moabites, ... "⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Ibid, Vol. II, p. 393.

⁴⁵ Ibid, Vol. II, p. 146.

⁴⁶ Ibid, Vol. II, p. 147.

The Author's opinion regarding the authorship of the Pentateuch after reviewing all the evidence is summarized in the following:

*"After coming to these results, we find no ground and no evidence to show that the books of the Pentateuch were composed by Moses."*⁴⁷

The Books of Samuel:

*"... many Jewish writers, with Theodoret, Procopius, Gregory the Great, Isidore, Eucherius, with the moderns Walther, Calovius, Hugo, De Lyra, Vatable, Sixtus Sinensis, Cajetan, Cornelius a Lapide, and others, think Samuel wrote the first twenty-four chapters, and Nathan and Gad the rest. But Abarbanel, Jacob, Ben Chajim, and Grotius, make Jeremiah the author."*⁴⁸

The Book of the Kings:

*"Havemik and Movers make use of the affinity between the books of Kings, and, in some places, of Jeremiah's writings; for example, between 1 Kings ix. 8, 9, and Jer. xxii. 8; 2 Kings xvii. 13, 14, and Jer. vii. 13, 24; 2 Kings xxi. 12, and Jer. xix. 3; and the identity of Jer. lii. with 2 Kings xxiv. 18, xxv., to support their different opinions—one, that Jeremiah wrote the books of Kings; the other, that he wrote an older book of Kings, the source of the present books, and that these latter, and the prophecies of Jeremiah, were collected by the same compiler, who also wrote Jer. lii."*⁴⁹

Books of the Chronicles:

*"The author is unknown; but it is certain he must be sought among the priests."*⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Ibid, Vol. II, p. 160.

⁴⁸ Ibid, Vol. II, p. 228.

⁴⁹ Ibid, Vol. II, P. 252.

⁵⁰ Ibid, Vol. II, p. 315.

The Book of Ruth:

*"It follows, from the contents and design of the book, that it was written a considerable time after David. The language, though akin to that of the books of Samuel, seems to differ from that in its Chaldaisms and other peculiarities, and to be more modern."*⁵¹

The Book of Ezra:

*"It is quite obvious that this book is not the work of a single author. In the first part (i.-vi.) we find two ancient documents have been used in constructing the narrative."*⁵²

*"The opinion that this entire compilation originated with Ezra is wholly untenable. But, on the other hand, it must be admitted, the opinion that the author of the Chronicles was also the compiler of the book of Ezra, is very strongly favored by the affinity between the two books."*⁵³

The Book of Nehemiah:

*"... It is, therefore, obvious that the whole book did not originate with Nehemiah, but is the work of a compiler who lived considerably later."*⁵⁴

The Book of Esther:

*"... All these circumstances would favor the opinion that the author wrote in the Persian empire... These explanations would lead us to the time after the destruction of the Persian monarchy. The bloodthirsty spirit of revenge and persecution displayed in the book refers to the time of the Ptolemies and Seleucidae; at all events, the language belongs to a very late period."*⁵⁵

⁵¹ Ibid, Vol. II, p. 320.

⁵² Ibid, Vol. II, p. 324.

⁵³ Ibid, Vol. II, p. 328.

⁵⁴ Ibid, Vol. II, p. 335.

⁵⁵ Ibid, Vol. II, pp. 346-347.

Isaiah:

“Since in Chaps. i-xii there are combined passages that are certainly genuine, all of which relate to the kingdom of Judah, this is, perhaps, the original collection, to which the inscription (Chap. li) belongs. Bertholdt makes use of the account in Baba Bathra to support the opinion that Hezekiah caused this collection to be made. However, he also, on this account, separates i.1-ii.4, from it, which is too hazardous.

The prophecies, (xiii.-xxiii.,) with the exception of xiv:24-27, xvii.12-xviii.7, and xx., relate to foreign nations, and bear the title “oracle.” Perhaps the miscellaneous collection (xxviii.-xxxiii.) is a separate, small collection of passages that are certainly genuine.

The first part (i.-xxxix.) originated from the combination of these independent collections, to which xxiv.-xxvii., xxxiv., xxxv. were added. Then xxxvi.-xxxix. were appended, with the design of collecting together all that related to Isaiah.

Finally, the second part (xl., lxvi.) was added; but it is not clear for what reason. All this was done after the exile, and probably after the redaction of the older historical books.⁵⁶

Daniel:

“It appears Daniel is not the author of this book, ... It is full of improbabilities... This appears from its prophetic contents, which differ in a striking manner from all the other prophecies books, ... from the fact that honorable mention is made of Daniel himself, ... from the corrupt language, both Hebrew and Chaldee, and from the Greek words that are found in it ... The position of the book in the canon—in the Hagiographa—seems to prove it was written after the collection of the Prophets was closed...”⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Ibid, Vol. II, pp. 390-391.

⁵⁷ Ibid, Vol. II, pp. 488-493.

The Psalms:

"In the titles, the following authors are mentioned: Moses, David, Solomon, Asaph, Heman, Ethan, the sons of Korah.

*It is surprising that none are ascribed to the old prophets, who certainly wrote a great part of the Psalms, and in general belonged to the first golden age of Hebrew poetry."*⁵⁸

"This Collection was gradually made from several smaller collections... It is certain we are to regard the first book (i.-xli.) as the original collection. The second book, it is probable, was made up from several separate compilations (xlivi.-l. and li. lxv.) and supplementary additions, and afterwards appended to the first book. A third collection was made, in the same manner, from separate collections, (lxxiii.-lxxxiii. lxxxiv.-lxxxix.) This formed the third book, and was distinguished from the two preceding by the formula.

*The two last books, which contain most of the liturgical pieces, were added in the same manner."*⁵⁹

Songs of Solomon:

*"The opinion that Solomon was the author, is but poorly supported by the inscriptions of the book, and is in itself improbable. Such passages as i. 4, 5, 12, iii. 6—11, vii. 6, viii. 11, 12, show that Solomon is not the author."*⁶⁰

Proverbs of Solomon:

"It is highly probable in itself that many proverbs have been ascribed to Solomon—as well as many lyric poems to David—which he never wrote.

These proverbs, judging from their number and variety, seem rather the productions of a whole nation than of a single man. Many of them

⁵⁸ Ibid, Vol. II, pp. 525-526.

⁵⁹ Ibid, Vol. II, pp. 528-529.

⁶⁰ Ibid, Vol. II, p. 539.

*relate to private and rustic life; with one of which Solomon was not sufficiently acquainted, and in the other he could not participate."*⁶¹

Ecclesiastes:

*"We shall not be far out of the way, if, with Rosenmuller, Knobel, and Ewald, we date the composition of the book in the last time of the Persian period, or the beginning of the Macedonian, when literary fictions of this kind were common."*⁶²

⁶¹ Ibid, Vol. II, p. 544.

⁶² Ibid, Vol. II, p. 553.

Testimony #6: Colenso - The Pentateuch and Book of Joshua Critically Examined (1862).

The Author: **John William Colenso** (1814-1883). He was a Cornish mathematician, defender of the Zulu and biblical scholar, who was the first Church of England Bishop of Natal.⁶³

The Book: *The Pentateuch and Book of Joshua Critically Examined*, Parts: I, II, III, IV & V, Longman Roberts & Green, London, (1862).

The reason for Colenso to write this book is an incident that happened while he was engaged in the translation of the Scriptures into the Zulu tongue to the natives in Natal. While translating the story of the Flood, a simple-minded but intelligent native looked up and asked: "Is all that true? Do you really believe that all the beasts, birds, and creeping things, from hot countries and cold, came thus by pairs and entered Noah's ark? And did Noah gather food for them all; for the beasts and birds of prey as well as the rest?"⁶⁴

Later, being driven to search more deeply into these questions, Colenso wrote to a friend in England to send him the best books on both sides of the question of the credibility of the Mosaic history. His friend sent him the works of Ewald and Kurtz, the former in German and the latter in an English translation. Laying Ewald on the shelf, he studied Kurtz, who maintained with great zeal and ability the historical accuracy of the Pentateuch. He then grappled with Ewald, who maintained an opposite view. The result of the Bishop's study, with the aid of a few other German books, appeared

⁶³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Colenso

⁶⁴ Colenso - The Pentateuch and Book of Joshua Critically Examined, Part I, p. vii.

in the first volume of his work issued in 1862, followed soon after by four more volumes.

Colenso showed that the Bible was composed by several writer over a period of 500 years, the earliest of whom lived in the time of Samuel, from 1100 to 1060 B.C., and the latest in the time of Jeremiah, from 641 to 623 B.C.

Part I contains 23 chapters. Twenty issues are discussed in this part:

1. The Family of Judah.
2. The Explanations of Expositors considered
3. The Size of the Court of the Tabernacle, compared "with the Number of the Congregation
4. Moses and Joshua addressing all Israel
5. The Extent of the Camp, compared with the Priest's Duties, and the daily Necessities of the People.
6. The Number of the People at the first Muster, compared with the Poll-tax raised six Months previously
7. The Israelites dwelling in Tents
8. The Israelites armed
9. The Institution of the Passover
10. The March out of Egypt
11. The Sheep and Cattle of the Israelites in the Desert
12. The Number of Israelites compared with the Extent of the Land of Canaan.
13. The Number of the First-borns, compared with the Number of male Adults
14. The Sojourning of the Israelites in Egypt
15. The Exodus in the fourth Generation
16. The Number of Israelites at the Time of the Exodus
17. The Danites and Levites at the Time of the Exodus
18. The Number of Priests at the Exodus, compared with their Duties, and with the Provision made for them

19. The Priests and their Duties at the Celebration of the Passover
20. The War on Midian.

In the following we look at some of the issues discussed in Part I.

The Family of Judah⁶⁵:

Colenso discussed a collection of events in Judah's family that were impossible to take place as was mentioned in Genesis, Ch. 38. Judah was forty-two years old when he went down with Jacob into Egypt, being three years older than his brother Joseph, who was then thirty-nine. And from that time nine years elapsed (seven of plenty and two of famine) before Jacob came down into Egypt. In these forty-two years of Judah's life the following events were recorded:

He grows up, marries, and has three sons. The eldest (Er) grows up, marries Tamar, and dies. The second son (Onan) marries his brother's widow and dies. The third son (Shelah), after waiting to grow to maturity, declines to marry the widow. Tamar then deceives Judah himself, slept with him, and bears him twins—Pharez and Zarah. One of these twins grows up and has two sons—Hezron and Hamul—born to him... All these events took place before Jacob goes down into Egypt.

The Institution of the Passover⁶⁶:

The whole population of Israel were instructed in one single day to keep the Passover, and actually did keep it. After midnight of the same day in which Moses received the command, the Israelites received notice to start for the wilderness. No one was to go out of

⁶⁵ Ibid, Part I, Ch. II.

⁶⁶ Ibid, Part I, Ch. X.

his house till morning, when they were to take their hurried flight with their cattle and herds. How could 2,000,000 people, scattered about over a wide district as they must have been with their cattle and herds, have gotten ready and taken a simultaneous hurried flight at twelve hours' notice?

The March Out of Egypt⁶⁷:

The Israelites, with their flocks and herds, reached the Red Sea, walking fifty to sixty miles over a sandy desert in three days! Marching fifty abreast, the able-bodied warriors alone would have filled up the road for seven miles, and the whole multitude would have made a column twenty-two miles long, so that the last of the body could not have been started until the front had advanced that distance—more than two days' journey for such a mixed company. Then the sheep and cattle must have formed another vast column, covering a much greater tract of ground in proportion to their number.

Upon what did these two million of sheep and oxen feed in the journey to the Red Sea over a desert region, sandy, gravelly, and stony alternately? How did the people manage with the sick and infirm, and especially with the 750 births that must have taken place in the three days' march?

The Number of Israelites at the Time of the Exodus⁶⁸:

The number of the children of Israel who went into Egypt was 70. They sojourned in Egypt 215 years. How could these people have increased in 215 years from 70 souls to number 600,000 warriors? It would have required an average number of 46 children to each

⁶⁷ Ibid, Part I, Ch. XI.

⁶⁸ Ibid, Part I, Ch. XVII

father. The 12 sons of Jacob had between them only 53 sons. At this rate of increase, in the fourth generation there would have been only 6,311 males, provided they were all living at the time of the exodus, instead of 1,000,000. If we add the fifth generation, who would be mostly children, the total number of males would not have exceeded 28,465.

Part II contains 22 chapters. Eighteen issues are discussed in this part:

1. Signs of Different Authors in the Pentateuch.
2. The Elohistic and Jehovahistic Writers.
3. The Earlier Historical Books of the Old Testament.
4. The Later Historical Books of the Old Testament.
5. Signs of Later Date in the Pentateuch.
6. Additional Signs of Later Date in the Pentateuch.
7. Was Samuel the Elohistic Writer of the Pentateuch?
8. Introduction of the Name Jehovah.
9. The Derivation of the Name Moriah.
10. Mount Gerizim the Mount of Abraham's Sacrifice.
11. The Names Elohim and Jehovah.
12. The Elohistic Psalms of David.
13. The Psalms of the Second Book.
14. The Sixty-eighth Psalm.
15. The Remaining Elohistic Psalms.
16. The Jehovahistic Psalms considered.
17. The Jehovahistic Names in the Book of Judges.
18. The Jehovahistic Names in the Books of Samuel.

In the following we look at some of the issues discussed in Part II.

Signs of Different Authors in the Pentateuch⁶⁹:

⁶⁹ Ibid, Part II, Ch. I.

The questions of the real origin, age, and authorship of the different portions of the Pentateuch and other early books of the Bible are investigated. The following points were made:

"The cosmogony of the 2nd chapter of Genesis is contradictory to that of chapter 1..."

"A similar criticism is applied to the story of the flood, which is evidently composed by two different writers, one making Noah take into the ark animals of every kind, including clean beasts, by twos (G. vii. 8, 9), and the other making him take in the clean beasts by sevens (v. 2, 5). In this story, as in that of the creation, one writer uses the name of God simply, and the other Lord God."

Elohistic and Jehovahistic Writers⁷⁰:

The book of Genesis bears evidence throughout of being the work of two different writers, one of whom is distinguished by the constant use of the word Elohim (translated "God"), and the other by the admixture with it of the name Jehovah (translated "Lord"). The Elohistic passages, taken together, form a very tolerably connected whole, only interrupted here and there by a break caused apparently by the Jehovahistic writer having removed some part of the Elohistic narrative, replacing it, perhaps, by one of his own. Thus, there are two contradictory accounts of the creation and of the deluge intermingled.

The Pentateuch: Composed Long After Moses's Death⁷¹:

The books of the Pentateuch are never ascribed to Moses in the inscriptions of Hebrew manuscripts, or anywhere else, except in our

⁷⁰ Ibid, Part II, Ch. II.

⁷¹ Ibid, Part II, Ch. III.

modern translations. They must have been composed at a later age than that of Moses or Joshua, as is shown by numerous passages that speak of places and things by names that were not known nor given till long after the death of these men.

The Books of Kings Written as Late as 561 B.C.⁷²:

The Books of Kings seem to have been written as late, at least, as 561 B.C., because in 2 Kings xxv. 27-30, mention is made of Evil-merodach, king of Babylon, taking Jehoiachin, king of Judah, out of prison, and feeding him " all the days of his life." Evil-merodach came to the throne 561 B.C. and reigned two years.

The Chronicles Written About 400 B.C.⁷³:

The author of the Books of Chronicles was probably a priest or Levite, who wrote about 400 B.C. or nearly 200 years after the captivity, and 650 years after David came to the throne. These books go over the same grounds as the books of Samuel and Kings, and often in the very same words. The Chronicles are very inaccurate, and often contradictory to Samuel and Kings.

Part III discusses in detail the authorship of Deuteronomy; when was it written, and by whom? The main purpose of this volume is to demonstrate that Deuteronomy, and hence the Pentateuch, cannot be written in its entirety by Moses himself. On this conclusion, Colenso wrote:⁷⁴

"We shall consider that the following points have now been established: —

⁷² Ibid, Part II, Ch. III.

⁷³ Ibid, Part II, Ch. IV.

⁷⁴ Ibid, Part III, p. 430.

- (i) *The book of Deuteronomy must have been written chiefly by one writer;*
- (ii) *This writer must have been a different person from the writer or writers, by whom the rest of the Pentateuch, speaking generally, was written;*
- (iii) *The Deuteronomist, whoever he may have been, must have lived in a later age than either the Elohist or Jehovahist, since he takes for granted facts recorded in their narrative;*
- (iv) *There are some indications of this book having been written in a very late age of the Hebrew history;*
- (v) *There are historical circumstances, which suggest that it may have been composed in the early part of Josiah's reign;*
- (vi) *There is a remarkable correspondence between the peculiar expressions of the Deuteronomist and the language of Jeremiah, who did live in that age."*

And after further analysis, he concludes the following:

"... These facts, it would seem, compel us to this conclusion, that, whatever portion of the other four books may have been actually composed by the hand of Moses, whatever of the laws and ceremonies contained in them may have been handed down from the Mosaic age, yet certainly the book of Deuteronomy was not written by him, but is the product of a much later time, and bears the distinct impress of that time and its circumstances."⁷⁵

Part IV is composed of 29 chapters, and it discusses the contradictions between the Elohist and Jehovahist accounts in the first eleven chapters of Genesis. It also includes reviews to the myths and legends of other nations and cultures and their influence on the writing of the Bible. It suffices here to quote some of what the Author wrote in the last chapter of the Volume, "Concluding Remarks":

⁷⁵ Ibid, Part III, p. 619.

"We have now completed the analysis and examination of the First Eleven Chapters of Genesis. The analysis has clearly shown that this portion of the Pentateuch, at all events, is not the work of one author, — that the hands of (at least) two distinct writers can be traced throughout in it, one of whom, as far as present appearances indicate, must have written subsequently to the other, and with the older document before him, — though it still remains to be considered whether the later of the two wrote merely to fill up the blanks, which appeared to his mind to exist in the older story, or whether he composed originally a complete separate narrative, which was afterwards, in a later age, incorporated with the older work."⁷⁶

"But, whether Moses wrote the Elohistic document or Not, ... it is plain, from what we have had before us, that not only is the Elohistic matter of this part of Genesis at variance in some important points with the Jehovahistic, but they both conflict repeatedly, in the strongest manner, with the undoubted facts of Science, and neither, therefore, of the two narratives can be regarded as throughout historically true."⁷⁷

The last volume, Part V, is composed of 22 chapters in addition to a separate section entitled: "Critical Analysis of Genesis." This volume addresses miscellaneous important issues that complete and enhance the studies in the previous volumes.

Chapter XX, for example, is entitled: "The Corrupt Worship of Jehovah in Israel."⁷⁸ In this chapter, the Author reminds us of the idolatrous practices of the Israelites as detailed in 2 Kings, Ch. 23, Verses 4-24. These verses describe the actions of the good king Josiah he took to remove and destroy the idols and its places of worship,

⁷⁶ Ibid, Part IV, p. 292.

⁷⁷ Ibid, Part IV, p. 294.

⁷⁸ Ibid, Part V, p. 285.

abolish all idolatrous practices, and remove (or execute) the priests who used to run and organize those operations.

The Author shows a special interest in Verse 20 that may describe human sacrifices being practiced at those evil temples:⁷⁹

20. And he slew all the priests of the high places that were there upon the altars, and burned men's bones upon them, and returned to Jerusalem. (2 Kings 23:20).

The evidence to the existence of human sacrifice practice among the idolatrous Israelites is further supported by the following verses in the different books in the OT:

30. For the children of Judah have done evil in my sight, saith the Lord: they have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to pollute it.

31. And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart. (Jer. 7:30-31).

4. Because they have forsaken me, and have estranged this place, and have burned incense in it unto other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah, and have filled this place with the blood of innocents;

5. They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind: (Jer. 19:4-5).

37. Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils,

⁷⁹ Ibid, Part V, p. 287.

38. And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood. (Ps. 106:37-38).

3. Moreover he burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and burnt his children in the fire, after the abominations of the heathen whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel. (2 Chron. 28:3).

Testimony #7: Doane - Bible Myths and Their Parallels in Other Religions (1882).

The Author: **Thomas William Doane** (1852-1885) was an American author, considered one of the most significant contributors to the Freethought movement.

The Book: *Bible Myths and Their Parallels in Other Religions Being a Comparison of the Old and Testament Myths and Miracles with Those of Heathen Nations of Antiquity*, 4e, The Truth Seeker Co. (1882)

The book is a monumental work that is composed of forty chapters. The Author relies heavily on external testimonies and he quotes extensively from the work of other renowned scholars. In the first pages of the book he lists about 160 names of authors and books quoted in his work (this includes the additions to the third edition).⁸⁰

The first ten chapters discuss the following myths in the Old Testament:

- The Creation and Fall of Man (Ch. I),
- The Deluge (Ch. II),
- The Tower of Babel (Ch. III),
- The Trial of Abraham's Faith (Ch. IV),
- Jacob's Vision of the Ladder (Ch. V),
- The Exodus from Egypt (Ch. VI),
- Receiving the Ten Commandments (Ch. VII),
- Samson and his Exploits (Ch. VIII),
- Jonah Swallowed by a Big Fish (Ch. IX), and

⁸⁰ Doane (1882) - *Bible Myths and Their Parallels ...*, pp. xi-xxiii.

- Circumcision (Ch. X).

In Chapter I, the roots of the biblical myth of creation and fall of man is analyzed. It is found to have parallels in the Persian and Babylonian ancient civilizations. Cuneiform inscriptions show conclusively that the Babylonians had this legend some 1,500 years or more before the Hebrews heard of it. Similar legends are also found in the ancient Egyptian, East African, Hindoo and Chinese civilizations.⁸¹

In Chapter II, the legend of the Noachian Deluge is shown to have its roots in the Assyrian legends. George Smith of the British Museum discovered tetra cotta tablets written on it a deluge account that agrees in almost every particular with the deluge account in Genesis.⁸²

Floods are common natural catastrophes that happen on a regular basis in many parts of the world. It is no surprise to find many flood legends in the ancient writings.

In Chapter III, the “Tower of Babel” and the “Confusion of Tongues” legends are examined. It is shown that the “Tower of Babel” legend has its roots in the Babylonian legends, whereas, the “Confusion of Tongues” legend has many parallels in the Armenian, Hindoo and Mongolian traditions.⁸³

In Chapter IV, the Author shows that there is a Hindoo story that is similar to the biblical story of the trial of Abraham’s faith, when he was ordered by God to sacrifice his son. Other similar legends exist

⁸¹ Ibid, pp. 8-9.

⁸² Ibid, pp. 22-23.

⁸³ Ibid, pp. 35-36.

in the Phoenician and Grecian fables.⁸⁴ The reason for the existence of many parallels to this legend is because human offerings to the gods were at one time almost universal in many cultures.⁸⁵

Chapter V examines the legend of “Jacob’s Vision of the Ladder.” The Author believes that the doctrine of Metempsychosis is behind this legend. On this, he writes:

“The doctrine of Metempsychosis has evidently something to do with this legend. It means, in the theological acceptation of the term, the supposed transition of the soul after death, into another substance or body than that which it occupied before. The belief in such a transition was common to the most civilized, and the most uncivilized, nations of the earth.

It was believed in, and taught by, the Braliminical Hindoos, the Buddhists, the natives of Egypt, several philosophers of ancient Greece, the ancient Druids, the natives of Madagascar, several tribes of Africa and North America, the ancient Mexicans, and by some Jewish and Christian sects.”⁸⁶

In Chapter VI, the Author discusses the legend of “the Exodus from Egypt, and Passage through the Red Sea” in some detail. Although he accepts that the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt took place, he believes that the writer of this legend, whoever he may have been, was familiar with the legends related of the Sun-god, Bacchus, as he has given Moses the credit of performing some of the miracles which were attributed to that god.⁸⁷ The Author, also

⁸⁴ Ibid, p. 39.

⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 40.

⁸⁶ Ibid, pp. 42-43.

⁸⁷ Ibid, p. 51.

reports a story similar to this legend that involves Alexander the Great⁸⁸, and a Hindoo fable that involves the infant Crishna.⁸⁹

We fast forward to Part II of the book, in which, the Author examines the myths and legends in the New Testament. This part comprises the bulk of the book and it includes detailed analysis to the following legends:

1. The Miraculous Birth of Christ Jesus (Ch. XII),
2. The Star of Bethlehem (Ch. XIII)
3. The Song of the Heavenly Host (Ch. XIV)
4. The Divine Child Recognized, and Presented with Gifts (Ch. XV),
5. The Birthplace of Christ Jesus (Ch. XVI),
6. The Genealogy of Christ Jesus (Ch. XVII),
7. The Slaughter of the Innocents (Ch. XVIII),
8. The Temptation, and Fast of Forty Days (Ch. XIX),
9. The Crucifixion of Christ Jesus (Ch. XX),
10. The Darkness at the Crucifixion (Ch. XXI)
11. "He Descended into Hell" (Ch. XXII),
12. The Resurrection and Ascension of Christ Jesus (Ch. XXIII),
13. The Second Coming of Christ Jesus, and the Millennium (Ch. XXIV),
14. Christ Jesus as Judge of the Dead (Ch. XXV),
15. Christ Jesus as Creator, and Alpha and Omega (Ch. XXVI),
16. The Miracles of Christ Jesus, and the Primitive Christians (Ch. XXVII),
17. Christ Crishna And Christ Jesus (Ch. XXVIII),
18. Christ Buddha And Christ Jesus (Ch. XXIX),
19. The Eucharist or Lord's Supper (Ch. XXX),
20. Baptism (Ch. XXXI),
21. The Worship of the Virgin Mother (Ch. XXXII),

⁸⁸ Ibid, p. 55.

⁸⁹ Ibid, p. 56.

22. Christian Symbols (Ch. XXXIII),
23. The Birth-Day of Christ Jesus (Ch. XXXIV), and
24. The Trinity (Ch. XXXV).

We review below some of the myths and legends discussed in this part.

In Chapter XX, "The Crucifixion of Christ Jesus", the Author points out that the idea of expiation by the sacrifice of a god was to be found among the Hindoos even in Vedic Times. The sacrifice was mystically identified with the victim, which was regarded as the ransom for sin, and the instrument of its annulment.⁹⁰ The idea of redemption from sin through the suffering and death of a Divine Incarnate Saviour, is simply the crowning point of the idea entertained by primitive man that the gods demanded a sacrifice of some kind, to atone for some sin, or avert some calamity.

The Author asserts that this legend was general and popular among the heathens:

*"The belief of redemption from sin by the sufferings of a Divine Incarnation, whether by death on the cross or otherwise, was general and popular among the heathen, centuries before the time of Jesus of Nazareth, and this dogma, no matter how sacred it may have become, or how consoling it may be, must fall along with the rest of the material of which the Christian church is built."*⁹¹

Christian dogma teaches that it was not "God the Father," but "God the Son" who created the heavens, the earth, and all that therein is. The writer of the fourth Gospel says:

3. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. (John 1:3).

⁹⁰ Ibid, p. 181.

⁹¹ Ibid, p. 183.

10. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. (John 1:10).

And in the Epistle to the Colossians, we read that:

16. For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: (Col. 1:16).

The root of this Christian dogma is examined in Chapter XXVI. The Author brings in external testimonies that reveal to us that parallels to this dogma existed in many ancient cultures.⁹²

To start with, according to the religion of the Hindoos, it is Crishna, the Son, and the second person in the ever-blessed Trinity, “*who is the origin and end of all worlds, all this universe came into being through him, the eternal maker.*”⁹³

In the holy book of the Hindoos, called the “Bhagvat Geeta,” may be found the following words of Crishna, addressed to his “beloved disciple” Arjouan:

“*I am the Lord of all created beings.*” “*Mankind was created by me of four kinds, distinct in their principles, and in their duties; know me then to be Creator of mankind, uncreated, and without decay.*”

In the Chaldean oracles, the doctrine of the “Only Begotten Son,” as Creator, is taught.⁹⁴

According to ancient Persian mythology, there is one supreme essence, invisible and incomprehensible, named “*Zerudne Akerene,*”

⁹² Ibid, p. 247.

⁹³ Ibid, p. 247.

⁹⁴ Ibid, p. 248.

which signifies “unlimited time,” or “the eternal.” From him emanated *Ormuzd*, “King of Light,” the “First-born of the Eternal One.” Now, this “First-born of the Eternal One” is he by whom all things were made, all things came into being through him; he is the Creator.⁹⁵

According to the religion of the ancient Assyrians, it was *Narduk*, the Logos, the word, “the eldest son of *Hea*,” “the Merciful One,” “the Life-giver,” who created the heavens, the earth, and all that therein is.⁹⁶

Finally, we look at the doctrine of the Trinity that is investigated in Chapter XXXV. The most celebrated statement of this mysterious doctrine is to be found in the Athanasian creed, which asserts that:

“The Catholic faith is this: That we worship One God as Trinity, and Trinity in Unity - neither confounding the persons, nor dividing the substance - for there is One person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one; the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal.”

The result of the investigation revealed that the Trinity dogma was widely practiced in many ancient cultures for ages before the time of Christianity. On this, the Author writes:

“The result of our investigations then, is that, for ages before the time of Christ Jesus or Christianity, God was worshiped in the form of a TRIAD, and that this doctrine was extensively diffused through all nations. That it was established in regions as far distant as China and Mexico, and immemorially acknowledged through the whole extent of Egypt and India. That it flourished with equal vigor among the snowy mountains of Thibet, and the vast deserts of Siberia. That the barbarians of central Europe, the Scandinavians, and the Druids of Britain and

⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 249.

⁹⁶ Ibid, p. 249.

*Ireland, bent their knee to an idol of a Triune God. What then becomes of "the Ever- Blessed Trinity" of Christianity? It must fall, together with all the rest of its dogmas, and be buried with the Pagan debris."*⁹⁷

The book includes a chapter, Ch. XXXVI, that has the title: "Paganism in Christianity." In the opening paragraph of this chapter, the Author asserts the following:

*"OUR assertion that that which is called Christianity is nothing more than the religion of Paganism, we consider to have been fully verified. We have found among the heathen, centuries before the time of Christ Jesus, the belief in an incarnate God born of a virgin; his previous existence in heaven; the celestial signs at the time of his birth; the rejoicing in heaven; the adoration by the magi and shepherds; the offerings of precious substances to the divine child; the slaughter of the innocents; the presentation at the temple; the temptation by the devil; the performing of miracles; the crucifixion by enemies; and the death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven. We have also found the belief that this incarnate God was from all eternity; that lie was the Creator of the world, and that he is to be Judge of the dead at the last day. We have also seen the practice of Baptism, and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper or Eucharist, added to the belief in a Triune God, consisting of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost..."*⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Ibid, p. 379.

⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 384.

Testimony #8: Ingersoll - Some Mistakes of Moses (1889).

The Author: **Robert Green "Bob" Ingersoll** (1833 –1899) was an American writer and orator during the Golden Age of Free Thought, who campaigned in defense of agnosticism.⁹⁹

The Book: *Some Mistakes of Moses*, 10e, C.P. Farrel Pub. (1889).

In the first paragraph of the “Preface”, the Author blasts the Bible as a barbaric book, and writes the following:¹⁰⁰

“For many years I have regarded the Pentateuch simply as a record of a barbarous people, in which are found a great number of the ceremonies of savagery, many absurd and unjust laws, and thousands of ideas inconsistent with known and demonstrated facts. To me it seemed almost a crime to teach that this record was written by inspired men; that slavery, polygamy, wars of conquest and extermination were right, and that there was a time when men could win the approbation of infinite Intelligence, Justice, and Mercy, by violating maidens and by butchering babes. To me it seemed more reasonable that savage men had made these laws; ...”

The Author declares the purpose of writing the book:¹⁰¹

“I want to do what little I can to make my country truly free, to broaden the intellectual horizon of our people, to destroy the prejudices born of ignorance and fear, to do away with the blind worship of the ignoble past, with the idea that all the great and good are dead, that the living are totally depraved, that all pleasures are sins, that sighs and groans are alone pleasing to God, that thought is dangerous, that intellectual courage is a crime, that cowardice is a virtue, that to carry a

⁹⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_G._Ingersoll

¹⁰⁰ Ingersoll (1889) - *Some Mistakes of Moses*, p. v.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, p. 13.

cross in this world will give us a palm in the next, and that we must allow one priest to be the pilot of our souls."

On the lack of a clear message from God, the Author writes:

*"Moses differed from most of the makers of sacred books by his failure to say anything of a future life, by failing to promise heaven, and to threaten hell. Upon the subject of a future state, there is not one word in the Pentateuch."*¹⁰²

*"Is it not strange that God said nothing to Adam and Eve about a future life; that he should have kept these "infinite verities" to himself and allowed millions to live and die without the hope of heaven, or the fear of hell?"*¹⁰³

Commenting on the Noachian Flood, he writes:

*"It is a little curious that when God wished to reform the ante-diluvian world he said nothing about hell; that he had no revivals, no camp-meetings, no tracts, no outpourings of the Holy Ghost, no baptisms, no noon prayer meetings, and never mentioned the great doctrine of salvation by faith. If the orthodox creeds of the world are true, all those people went to hell without ever having heard that such a place existed. If eternal torment is a fact, surely these miserable wretches ought to have been warned. They were threatened only with water when they were in fact doomed to eternal fire!"*¹⁰⁴

*"Volumes might be written upon the infinite absurdity of this most incredible, wicked and foolish of all the fables contained in that repository of the impossible, called the bible. To me it is a matter of amazement, that it ever was for a moment believed by any intelligent human being."*¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Ibid, p. 47.

¹⁰³ Ibid, p. 141.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, p. 141.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 155.

*“For me it is impossible to believe the story of the deluge. It seems so cruel, so barbaric, so crude in detail, so absurd in all its parts, and so contrary to all we know of law, that even credulity itself is shocked.”*¹⁰⁶

On the credibility of the Bible, he comments:

*“No one pretends that Shakespeare was inspired, and yet all the writers of the books of the Old Testament put together, could not have produced Hamlet.”*¹⁰⁷

*“If there are mistakes in the bible, certainly they were made by man. If there is anything contrary to nature, it was written by man. If there is anything immoral, cruel, heartless or infamous, it certainly was never written by a being worthy of the adoration of mankind.”*¹⁰⁸

*“Because he rested on that day (Sunday) he sanctified it, and for that reason and for that alone, it was by the Jews considered a holy day ... How is it possible to sanctify a space of time? Is rest holier than labor?”*¹⁰⁹

On the absurdity of the “Tower Babel” story, he comments:

“According to the bible, up to the time of the building of that tower, the whole earth was of one language and of one speech, and would have so remained until the present time had not an effort been made to build a tower whose top should reach into heaven. Can anyone imagine what objection God would have to the building of such a tower? And how could the confusion of tongues prevent its construction? How could language be confounded? It could be confounded only by the destruction of memory. Did God destroy the memory of mankind at that time, and if so, how? Did he paralyze that portion of the brain presiding over the organs

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, p. 164.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p. 52.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, p. 91.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, p. 101, 103.

of articulation, so that they could not speak the words, although they remembered them clearly, or did he so touch the brain that they could not hear? Will some theologian, versed in the machinery of the miraculous, tell us in what way God confounded the language of mankind? ...

*Why did "the Lord come down to see the city and the tower?" Could he not see them from where he lived or from where he was? Where did he come down from? Did he come in the daytime, or in the night? We are taught now that God is everywhere; that he inhabits immensity; that he is in every atom, and in every star. If this is true, why did he "come down to see the city and the tower?" Will some theologian explain this?"*¹¹⁰

On the immorality of the Bible, he writes:

"We are continually told that the bible is the very foundation of modesty and morality; while many of its pages are so immodest and immoral that a minister, for reading them in the pulpit, would be instantly denounced as an unclean wretch. Every woman would leave the church, and if the men stayed, it would be for the purpose of chastising the minister.

*Is there any saving grace in hypocrisy? Will men become clean in speech by believing that God is unclean? Would it not be far better to admit that the bible was written by barbarians in a barbarous, coarse and vulgar age? Would it not be safer to charge Moses with vulgarity, instead of God? Is it not altogether more probable that some ignorant Hebrew would write the vulgar words?"*¹¹¹

On the killing of the firstborn of the Egyptians, he writes:

"What had these children done? Why should the babes in the cradle be destroyed on account of the crime of Pharaoh? Why should the cattle be destroyed because man had enslaved his brother? In those days women

¹¹⁰ Ibid, p. 173-175.

¹¹¹ Ibid, p. 179.

and children and cattle were put upon an exact equality, and all considered as the property of the men ; and when man in some way excited the wrath of God, he punished them by destroying all their cattle, their wives, and their little ones. Where can words be found bitter enough to describe a god who would kill wives and babes because husbands and fathers had failed to keep his law? Every good man, and every good woman, must hate and despise such a deity."¹¹²

On the absurdity of the flight of 3 million people, he comments:

*"All of the civilized nations of the world could not feed and support three millions of people on the desert of Sinai for forty years. It would cost more than one hundred thousand millions of dollars and would bankrupt Christendom. They had with them their flocks and herds, and the sheep were so numerous that the Israelites sacrificed, at one time, more than one hundred and fifty thousand first-born lambs. How were these flocks supported? What did they eat? Where were meadows and pastures for them? There was no grass, no forests - nothing! There is no account of its having rained baled hay, nor is it even claimed that they were miraculously fed. To support these flocks, millions of acres of pasture would have been required."*¹¹³

On the use of the "Shekel" currency, the Author comments:

"In the thirtieth chapter of Exodus, we are told that the people, when numbered, must give each one a half shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary. At that time no such money existed, and consequently the account could not, by any possibility, have been written until after there was a shekel of the sanctuary, and there was no such thing until long after the death of Moses. If we should read that Caesar paid his troops in pounds, shillings and pence, we would certainly know that the account

¹¹² Ibid, p. 205.

¹¹³ Ibid, p. 211.

was not written by Caesar, nor in his time, but we would know that it was written after the English had given these names to certain coins."¹¹⁴

On the treatment of leprosy in Lev., Ch. 14, the Author writes:

"Nothing can be more wonderful than the medical ideas of Jehovah. He had the strangest notions about the cause and cure of disease. With him everything was miracle and wonder. In the fourteenth chapter of Leviticus, we find the law for cleansing a leper: — " Then shall the priest take for him that is to be cleansed, two birds, alive and clean, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop. And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel, over running water. As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip them, and the living bird, in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water. And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy, seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose into the open field."

We are told that God himself grave these directions to Moses. Does anybody believe this? Why should the bird be killed in an earthen vessel? Would the charm be broken if the vessel was of wood? Why over running water? What would be thought of a physician now, who would give a prescription like that?"¹¹⁵

On "Inspired War", he writes:

"If the bible be true, God commanded his chosen people to destroy men simply for the crime of defending their native land. They were not allowed to spare trembling and white-haired age, nor dimpled babes clasped in the mothers' arms. They were ordered to kill women, and to pierce, with the sword of war, the unborn child. "Our heavenly Father" commanded the Hebrews to kill the men and women, the fathers, sons and brothers, but to preserve the maidens also

¹¹⁴ Ibid, p. 229.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, p. 236.

killed? Why were they spared? Read the thirty-first chapter of Numbers, and you will find that the maidens were given to the soldiers and the priests. Is there, in all the history of war, a more infamous thing than this? Is it possible that God permitted the violets of modesty, that grow and shed their perfume in the maiden's heart, to be trampled beneath the brutal feet of lust? If this was the order of God, what, under the same circumstances, would have been the command of a devil? When, in this age of the world, a woman, a wife, a mother, reads this record, she should, with scorn and loathing, throw the book away. A general, who now should make such an order, giving over to massacre and rapine a conquered people, would be held in execration by the whole civilized world. Yet, if the bible be true, the supreme and infinite God was once a savage."¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ Ibid, p. 252.

Testimony #9: Gladden - Who Wrote the Bible? A Book for the People (1891).

The Author: **Washington Gladden** (1836-1918) was a leading American Congregational pastor and early leader in the Social Gospel movement.¹¹⁷

The Book: *Who Wrote the Bible? A Book for the People*, Houghton, Mifflin and Co. (1891).

The book is composed of 13 chapters. The titles of these chapters give a clear roadmap for the reader to navigate through the book:

- I. A Look into the Hebrew Bible
- II. What Did Moses Write?
- III. Sources of the Pentateuch
- IV. The Earlier Hebrew Histories
- V. The Hebrew Prophecies
- VI. The Later Hebrew Histories
- VII. The Poetical Books
- VIII. The Earlier New Testament Writings
- IX. The Origin of the Gospels
- X. New Testament History and Prophecy
- XI. The Canon
- XII. How the Books Were Written
- XIII. How Much Is the Bible Worth?

We should remember that the Author was a leading Congregational pastor who held several pastoral positions in different churches. It is natural to expect him to defend his faith and try to find plausible explanations to the many problems in the Bible.

¹¹⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washington_Gladden

Chapter II carries the title: “What Did Moses Write?” In answering this question, he presented his analysis to the evidence related to the authorship of the Pentateuch, and reached the following conclusions:¹¹⁸

- “1. *The Pentateuch could never have been written by any one man, inspired or otherwise.*
- 2. *It is a composite work, in which many hands have been engaged. The production of it extends over many centuries.*
- 3. *It contains writings which are as old as the times of Moses, and some that are much older.*

It is impossible to tell how much of it came from the hand of Moses, but there are considerable portions of it which, although they may have been somewhat modified by later editors, are substantially as he left them.”

In the above, he admitted the multiplicity of the authorship of the Pentateuch, but he also insisted that Moses was one of those authors.

The Author did not dispute what has become an accepted fact at his time, that the Pentateuch was composed of multiple documents (J, E, P & D) patched together into one document.

He analyzed the authorship of each of the other books in the Old Testament. In each case, he discussed the different opinions, and made his preference to which opinion he found plausible to him. In many cases, his preferences were more inclined toward the orthodox positions.

On analyzing the authorship of the New Testament documents, he recorded an interesting general observation; that the authors of

¹¹⁸ Gladden (1891) - *Who Wrote the Bible...*, p. 42.

those documents were not aware that what they were writing what would become later parts of a sacred book:

*"Of these books it must be first remarked that they were not only written separate, but that there is no trace in any of them of the consciousness on the part of the author that he was contributing to a collection of sacred writings..."*¹¹⁹

The above observation may have a negative impact on the credibility of those writings. This is because when a writer writes casual material, he usually does not give enough attention to the correctness and exactness of what he is writing. Also, he would be more inclined to record data and information without proper check to the credibility of its source.

The Author analyzed the Four Gospels and acknowledged the presence of many errors and contradictions in them. Based on that, he rejected the notion that the Gospels were divinely inspired:

*"From these and many other similar facts, we know that the theory of verbal inspiration is not true; but that these Evangelists were allowed to state each in his own language the facts known by him concerning our Lord, and that nothing like infallible accuracy was so much as attempted. The only inspiration that can be claimed for them is that which brought the important facts to their remembrance and guarded them against serious errors of history or doctrine."*¹²⁰

The Author also discussed the history of the Canon. He acknowledged the fact that the Canon was the cause of major conflicts between the different Christian sects. He observed that until his days, there were controversies on what books and documents should be included in the Canon and what should be excluded. On this issue, he wrote the following:

¹¹⁹ Ibid, pp. 207-208.

¹²⁰ Ibid, p. 252.

"But, it may be said, there have been great differences of opinion on this matter through all the ages, down to the sixteenth century; how do we know but that those good and holy men, like Ignatius and Clement and Tertullian and Origen in the early church, and Luther and Zwingli and Cecolampadius in the Reformed church, were right in rejecting some books that we receive and receiving some that we reject?

...

But, being a Protestant, you cannot help knowing that all general councils have made grave and terrible mistakes; that no one of them ever was infallible; and so you could not rest satisfied with the decisions of Trent and the Vatican, even if they gave you the same Bible that you now possess, which, of course, they do not. What certainty has the Protestant, then that his canon is the correct one? He has no absolute certainty. There is no such thing as absolute certainty with respect to historical religious truth. But this discussion has made one or two things plain to the dullest apprehension.

*The first is that the books of this Bible are not all of equal rank and sacredness. If there is one truth which all the ages, with all their voices, join to declare, it is that the Bible is made up of many different kinds of books, with very different degrees of sacredness and authority. For one, I do not wish to part with any of them; I find instruction in all of them, though in some of them, as in Esther and Ecclesiastes, it is rather as records of savagery and of skepticism, from which every Christian ought to recoil, that I can see any value in them. As powerful delineations of the kind of sentiments that the Christian ought not to cherish, and the kind of doubts that he cannot entertain without imperiling his soul, they may be useful. It is not, therefore, at all desirable that these ancient records should be torn asunder and portions of them flung away. That process of mutilation none of us is wise enough to attempt..."*¹²¹

¹²¹ Ibid, pp. 323-325.

The Author in the final chapter asks an important question: How Much Is the Bible Worth? In answering this question, he admits that the Bible is not an infallible Book; not historically, not scientifically, and not morally infallible:

"Our study has, indeed, made a few things plain. Among them is the certainty that the Bible is not an infallible Book, in the sense in which it is popularly supposed to be infallible. When we study the history of the several books, the history of the canon, the history of the distribution and reproduction of the manuscript copies, and the history of the versions, - when we discover that the "various readings" of the differing manuscripts amount to one hundred and fifty thousand, the impossibility of maintaining the verbal inerrancy of the Bible becomes evident. We see how human ignorance and error have been suffered to mingle with this stream of living water throughout all its course; if our assurance of salvation were made to depend upon our knowledge that every word of the Bible was of divine origin, our hopes of eternal life would be altogether insecure.

"The book is not infallible historically. It is a veracious record; we may depend upon the truthfulness of the outline which it gives us of the history of the Jewish people; but the discrepancies and contradictions which appear here and there upon its pages show that its writers were not miraculously protected from mistakes in dates and numbers and the order of events.

It is not infallible scientifically. It is idle to try to force the narrative of Genesis into an exact correspondence with geological science. It is a hymn of creation, wonderfully beautiful and pure; the central truths of monotheistic religion and of modern science are involved in it; but it is not intended to give us the scientific history of creation, and the attempt to make it bear this construction is highly injudicious.

It is not infallible morally. By this I mean that portions of this revelation involve an imperfect morality. Many things are here commanded which it would be wrong for us to do. ...

*Not to recognize the partialness and imperfection of this record in all these respects is to be guilty of a grave disloyalty to the kingdom of the truth. With all these facts staring him in the face, the attempt of any intelligent man to maintain the theoretical and ideal infallibility of all parts of these writings is a criminal blunder. Nor is there any use in loudly asserting the inerrancy of these books, with vehement denunciation of all who call it in question, and then in a breath admitting that there may be some errors and discrepancies and interpolations..."*¹²²

¹²² Ibid, pp. 351-353.

Testimony #10: Stanton - The Woman's Bible, Parts I & II, (1895, 1898).

The Author: **Elizabeth Cady Stanton** (1815 –1902) was an American suffragist, social activist, abolitionist, and leading figure of the early women's rights movement.¹²³

The Book:

- *The Woman's Bible, Part I; Comments on Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy*, European Pub. Co., New York (1895).
- *The Woman's Bible, Part II; Judges, Kings, Prophets and Apostles*, European Pub. Co., New York (1898).

The Co-Authors:

Part I of the book contains comments by:

- Elizabeth Cady Stanton (E.C.S.),
- Ellen Battelle Dietrick (E.B.D.),
- Lillie Devereux Blake (L.D.B.),
- Ursula N. Gestefeld (U.N.G.),
- Rev. Phebe Hanaford (P.A.H.),
- Louisa Southworth (L.S.),
- Clara Bewick Colby (C.B.C.),
- Frances Ellen Burr (F.E.B.).

Part II of the book contains comments by:

- Elizabeth Cady Stanton (E.C.S.),
- Ellen Battelle Dietrick (E.B.D.),
- Matilda Joslyn Gage (M.J.G.)
- Louisa Southworth (L.S.),
- Frances Ellen Burr (F.E.B.),

¹²³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elizabeth_Cady_Stanton

- Lucinda B. Chandler (L.B.C.),
- Rev. Phebe Hanaford (P.A.H.),
- Anonymous (Anon.),
- Clara B. Neyman (C.B.N.).

The Woman's Bible is a book that have women's commentaries on women's position in the Old and New Testaments. The comments are made on selected texts and chapters from the Bible that directly refer to women, and those in which women are made prominent by exclusion.

As to the motive behind writing the book, in the "Introduction", the Authors wrote:

*"The Bible teaches that woman brought sin and death into the world, that she precipitated the fall of the race, that she was arraigned before the judgment seat of Heaven, tried, condemned and sentenced. Marriage for her was to be a condition of bondage, maternity a period of suffering and anguish, and in silence and subjection, she was to play the role of a dependent on man's bounty for all her material wants, and for all the information she might desire on the vital questions of the hour, she was commanded to ask her husband at home."*¹²⁴

"Bible historians claim special inspiration for the Old and New Testaments containing most contradictory records of the same events, of miracles opposed to all known law, of customs that degrade the female sex of all human and animal life, stated in most questionable language that could not be read in a promiscuous assembly, and call all this "The Word of God."

The only points in which I differ from all ecclesiastical teaching is that I do not believe that any man ever saw or talked to God, I do not believe that God inspired the Mosaic code, or told the historians what they say he

¹²⁴ Stanton (1895) - *The Woman's Bible*, Part I, p. 7.

did about woman, for all religions on the face of earth degrade her, and so long as woman accepts the position that they assign her, her emancipation is impossible. Whatever the Bible may be made to do in Hebrew or Greek, in plain English it does not exalt and dignify woman. My standpoint for criticism is the revised edition of 1888. I will so far honour the revising committee of nine men who have given us the best exegesis they can according to their ability, although Disraeli said the last one before he died, contained 150,000 blunders in the Hebrew, and 7,000 in the Greek”¹²⁵

As to the manner of doing the practical work, E.C.S. proposed the following methodology:

“... Each person in the 8-woman team purchased two bibles, ran through them from Genesis to Revelation, marking all the texts that concerned women. The passages were cut out, and pasted in a blank book, and the commentaries then written underneath. Those not having time to read all the books can confine their labors to the particular ones they propose to review...”¹²⁶

We can see from the above, that each woman wrote here comments independently and on topics of here choice. The comments were later collected and grouped together to produce the book.

For example, on the two accounts of creation in Genesis, Chapters 1 and 2, we find three commentaries: by E.C.S., E.B.D., and L.D.B.

Stanton (E.C.S.) emphasized in her comment to the equality of man and women in the first account of creation when they were created together in the sixth day. She also pointed out that whoever wrote

¹²⁵ Ibid, p. 12.

¹²⁶ Ibid, p. 6.

that account could be a polytheist since the meaning of Elohim in Hebrew is “council of gods”:

“In the great work of creation, the crowning glory was realized, when man and woman were evolved on the sixth day, the masculine and feminine forces in the image of God, that must have existed eternally, in all forms of matter and mind. All the persons in the Godhead are represented in the Elohim the divine plurality taking counsel in regard to this last and highest form of life. Who were the member of this high council, and whether a duality or a trinity? Verse 27 declares the image of God male and female. How then is it possible to make woman an afterthought? ...”

*The above texts plainly show the simultaneous creation of man and woman, and their equal importance in the development of the race. All those theories based on the assumption that man was prior in the creation, have no foundation in Scripture...”*¹²⁷

Dietrick (E.B.D.) emphasized in her comment the high criticism aspects related the accounts of creation, and the mistakes in the English translation:

“The most important thing for a woman to note, in reading Genesis, is that that portion which is now divided into “the first three chapter”, contains two entirely separate, and very contradictory, stories of creation, written by two different, but equally anonymous authors. No Christian theologian of to-day, with any pretensions to scholarship, claims that Genesis was written by Moses...”

When it is remembered that the Jewish books were written on rolls of leather, without much attention to vowel points and with no division into verses or chapter, by uncritical copyists, who altered passage greatly, and did not always even pretend to understand what they were copying, then

¹²⁷ Ibid, p. 15.

the reader of Genesis begins to put herself in position to understand how it can be contradictory. Great as were the liberties which the Jews took with Genesis, those of the English translators, however, greatly surpassed them.

The first chapter of Genesis, for instance, in Hebrew, tells us, in verses one and two, "As to origin, created the gods (Elohim) these skies (or air or clouds) and this earth... And a wind moved upon the face of the waters." Here we have the opening of a polytheistic fable of creation, but, so strongly convinced were the English translators that the ancient Hebrews must have been originally monotheistic that they rendered the above, as follows: "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth .. And the spirit of God (!) moved upon the face of the waters."

It is now generally conceded that someone (nobody pretends to know who) at some time (nobody pretends to know exactly when), copied two creation myths on the same leather roll, one immediately following the other...

*Modern theologians have, for convenience sake, entitled these two fables, respectively, the Elohistic and the Jahoistic stories. They differ, not only in the point I have mentioned above, but in the order of the "creative acts;" in regard to the mutual attitude of man and woman, and in regard to human freedom from prohibitions imposed by deity."*¹²⁸

Blake (L.D.B.) pointed out that the early Hebrews were polytheists. She rejected the theory that woman is inferior to man because she was mentioned after him in the order of creation, for if that was true, man would be inferior to the creeping things, because he was created after them:

¹²⁸ Ibid, pp. 16-18.

"Many orientalist and students of theology have maintained that the consultation of the Gods here described is proof that Hebrews were in early days polytheists ...

In the detailed description of creation, we find gradually ascending series. Creeping things, "great sea monsters," (chap I, v. re, literal translation). "Every bird of wings," cattle and living things on the earth, the fish of the sea and the "birds of the heavens," then man, and last and crowning glory of the whole, woman.

*It cannot be maintained that woman was inferior to man even if, as asserted in chapter ii, she was created after him without at once admitting that man is inferior to the creeping things because created after them."*¹²⁹

E.C.S. commented on the story of casting out Hagar and Ishmael to the wilderness, and expressed her indignation to this story that portrays Abraham treating his own son and the woman who bore him in a cruel and inhumane way:

"In the scene Abraham does not appear in a very attractive light, rising early in the morning, and sending his child and its mother forth into the wilderness, with a breakfast of bread and water, to care for themselves. Why did he not provide them with a servant, an ass laden with provisions, and a tent to shelter them from the elements, or better still, some abiding, resting place. Common humanity demanded this much attention to his own son and the woman who bore him. But the worst feature in this drama is that it seems to have been done with Jehovah's approval.

Does anyone seriously believe that the great spirit of all good talked with these Jews, and really said the extraordinary things they report? It was, however, a very cunning way for the Patriarchs to enforce their own authority, to do whatever they desired, and say the Lord commanded them to do and say thus and so. Many pulpits even in our day enforce their

¹²⁹ Ibid, p. 19.

*lessons of subjection for woman with the same authority, "Thus saith the Lord," "Thou shalt," and "Thou shall not."*¹³⁰

Commenting on the story of Abraham, Sarah and the Pharaoh of Egypt, L.D.B. expressed her disgust to the implications of this story:

*"Abraham has been held up as one of the model men of sacred history. One credit he doubtless deserves, he was a monotheist, in the midst of the degraded and cruel forms of religion then prevalent in all the oriental world; this man and his wife saw enough of the light to worship a God of Spirit. Yet we find his conduct to the last degree reprehensible. While in Egypt in order to gain wealth he voluntarily surrenders his wife to Pharaoh. Sarah having been trained in subjection to her husband had no choice but to obey his will. When she left the king, Abraham complacently took her back without objection, which was no more than he should do seeing that her sacrifice had brought him wealth and honor. Like many a modern millionaire he was not a self-made but a wife-made man. When Pharaoh sent him away with his dangerously beautiful wife he is described as, "being rich in cattle, in silver and in gold," but it is a little curious that the man who thus gained wealth as the price of his wife's dishonor should have been held up as a model of all the patriarchal virtues."*¹³¹

We move now to the book of Numbers to read P.A.H.'s comments on the massacre of the Midianites that was committed on the orders of Moses in Numbers, Ch. 31:

"But how thankful we must be that we are no longer obliged to believe, as a matter of fact, of vital consequence to our eternal hope, each separate statement contained in the Pentateuch, such for instance, as the story related in Numbers xxxi! - where we are told that a force of twelve

¹³⁰ Ibid, p. 40.

¹³¹ Ibid, p. 44.

thousand Israelites slew all the males of the Midianites, took captive all the females and children, seized all their cattle and flocks, and all their goods, and burnt all their cities, and all their goodly castles, without the loss of a single man, -- and then, by command of Moses, butchered in cold blood all the women, except "the women-children and virgins, to be given to the priests and soldiers."

The amounted to thirty-two thousand, mostly, we suppose, under the age of sixteen. We may fairly reckon that there were as many more under the age of forty, and half as many more above forty, making altogether eighty thousand females, of whom, according to the story, Moses ordered forty-eight thousand to be killed, besides (say) twenty thousand young boys. The tragedy of Cawnpore, where three hundred were butchered, would sink into nothing, compared with such a massacre, if, indeed we were required to believe it.

*The obvious intention of Moses, as shown in these directions, was to keep the Jewish race from amalgamation. But the great lawgiver seems to have ignored the fact, or been ignorant of it, that transmission of race qualities is ever greater through the female line than through the male, and if they kept the women children for themselves they were making sure the fact that in days to come there would be Jewish descendants who might be Jews in name, but, through the law of heredity, aliens in spirit. The freedom of the natural law will make itself evident, for so called natural law is divine."*¹³²

The story of Miriam objecting to Moses' second marriage and the subsequent punishment of her by leprosy evoked strong indignation from Stanton. She considered it an example of the Bible's humiliation of women, and an evidence that Moses did not write the Torah:

¹³² Ibid, p. 121.

“... Miriam was older than Moses and had at this time the experience of 120 years. When Moses was an infant on the River Nile, Miriam was entrusted by his parents to watch the fate of the infant in the bulrushes, and the daughter of Pharaoh, in her daily walks by the river side. It was her diplomacy, that secured the child’s own mother for his nurse in the household of the King of Egypt.

It is rather remarkable, if Moses was as meek as he is represented in the third verse, that he should have penned that strong assertion of his own innate modesty. There are evidences at this and several other points that Moses was not the sole editor of the Pentateuch, if it can be shown that he wrote any part of it.

Speaking of the punishment of Miriam, Clarke in his commentaries says it is possible that Miriam was chief in this mutiny, hence she was punished while Aaron was spared. A mere excuse for man’s injustice; had he been a woman he would have shared the same fate. The real reason was that Aaron was a priest. Had he been smitten with leprosy; his sacred office would have suffered, and the priesthood fallen into disrepute.

As women are supposed to have no character or sacred office, it is always safe to punish them to the full extent of the law. So, Miriam was not only afflicted with leprosy, but also shut out of the camp for seven days. One would think that potential motherhood should make women as a class as sacred as the priesthood. In common parlance we have much fine-spun theorizing on the exalted office of the mother, her immense influence in moulding the character of her sons; “the hand that rocks the cradle moves the world,” etc., but in creeds and codes, in constitutions and Scripture, in prose and verse, we do not see these lofty paeans recorded or verified in living facts. As a class, women were treated among the Jews as an inferior order of beings, ...”¹³³

¹³³ Ibid, pp. 101-102.

In Part II of the book, a fact is mentioned that very little is written about Mary, the mother of Jesus, in the New Testament. Also, there are stories that Jesus ignored and mistreated his mother. Even Mary Magdalene, the woman who loved Jesus, received similar treatment. These facts drew the following comments from an “Anonymous” commenter:

“Is it not astonishing that so little is in the New Testament concerning the mother of Christ? ... The Gospels were written so long after the death of Christ that very little was known of him, and substantially nothing of his parents. How is it that not one word is said about the death of Mary, not one word about the death of Joseph? How did it happen that Christ did not visit his mother after his resurrection? The first time he speaks to his mother is when he was twelve years old. His mother having told him that she and his father had been seeking him, he replied: ‘How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my father’s business?’ The second time was at the marriage feast in Cana, when he said to her: ‘Woman, what have I to do with thee?’ And the third time was at the cross, when ‘Jesus, seeing his mother standing by the disciple whom he loved, said to her: ‘Woman, behold thy son;’ and the disciple: ‘Behold thy mother.’” And this is all.

...

Is it not strange that none of the disciples of Christ said anything about their parents - that we know absolutely nothing of them? Is there any evidence that they showed any particular respect even for the mother of Christ? Mary Magdalene is, in many respects, the tenderest and most loving character in the New Testament. According to the account, her love for Christ knew no abatement, no change - true even in the hopeless shadow of the cross. Neither did it die with his death. She waited at the sepulcher; she hastened in the early morning to his tomb; and yet the only comfort Christ gave to this true loving soul lies in these strangely cold and heartless words: “Touch me not.”¹³⁴

¹³⁴ Ibid, Part II, pp. 143-144.

The book is fun to read. The above excerpts are examples of what the reader would find there. The commentaries of those who participated in writing the book are witty and their arguments are convincing. Their testimonies against the Bible are damning.

Testimony #11: Burgon - The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels (1896).

The Author: **John William Burgon** (1813-1888). He was an English Anglican divine who became the Dean of Chichester Cathedral in 1876.¹³⁵

The Book: *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels*, George Bell and Sons (1896)

In the “Introduction” of the book, Burgon analyzes the causes of the corruptions of the New Testament to be:

“... the causes of corruption are divided into (I) such as proceeded from Accident, and (II) those which were Intentional. Under the former class we find (1) those which were involved in pure Accident, or (2) in what is termed Homoeoteleuton where lines or sentences ended with the same word or the same syllable, or (3) such as arose in writing from Uncial letters, or (4) in the confusion of vowels and diphthongs which is called Itacism, or (5) in Liturgical Influence. The remaining instances may be conveniently classed as Intentional, not because in all cases there was a settled determination to alter the text, for such if any was often of the faintest character, but because some sort of design was to a greater or less degree embedded in most of them. Such causes were (1) Harmonistic Influence, (2) Assimilation, (3) Attraction ; such instances too in their main character were (4) Omissions, (5) Transpositions, (6) Substitutions, (7) Additions, (8) Glosses, (9) Corruption by Heretics, (10) Corruption by Orthodox.”¹³⁶

¹³⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Burgon

¹³⁶ Burgon (1896) - The Causes of the Corruption ..., pp. 8-9.

On investigating the causes of corruptions in the New Testament (NT), the Author points out the thousands of differences between Codex B and the common Gospels. He emphasizes that these differences cannot be called 'Various Reading' because most of them are instances of omissions:¹³⁷

"Thus, Codex B (Codex Vaticanus) differs from the commonly received Text of Scripture in the Gospels alone in 7578 places; of which no less than 2877 are instances of omission. In fact, omissions constitute by far the larger number of what are commonly called 'Various Readings.' How then can those be called 'various readings' which are really not readings at all? How, for example, can that be said to be a 'various reading' of St. Mark xvi. 9-20, which consists in the circumstance that the last 12 verses are left out by two MSS.? Again, how can it be called a 'various reading' of St. John xxi. 25, to bring the Gospel abruptly to a close, as Tischendorf does, at v. 24? These are really nothing else but indications either of a mutilated or else an interpolated text. And the question to be resolved is, on which side does the corruption lie? and, how did it originate?"

Then the Author discusses some of the causes of corruption that are honest and unintentional, and he gave examples to each case. But, then, he concludes that the majority of the corruption were intentional and by design:¹³⁸

"I once hoped that it might be possible to refer all the Corruptions of the Text of Scripture to ordinary causes: as, careless transcription, divers' accidents, misplaced critical assiduity, doctrinal animus, small acts of unpardonable licence.

But increased attention and enlarged acquaintance with the subject, have convinced me that by far the larger number of the omissions of such

¹³⁷ Ibid, p. 15.

¹³⁸ Ibid, p. 23.

Codexes as NBLD must needs be due to quite a different cause. These MSS. Omit so many words, phrases, sentences, verses of Scripture, that it is altogether incredible that the proximity of like endings can have much to do with the matter. Inadvertency may be made to bear the blame of some omissions: it cannot bear the blame of shrewd and significant omissions of clauses, which invariably leave the sense complete. A systematic and perpetual mutilation of the inspired Text must needs be the result of design, not of accident."

Then the Author dedicates five chapters to discuss in full detail the types of accidental causes of corruption:

- Chapter II - Accidental Causes of Corruption: Pure Accident.
- Chapter III. - Accidental Causes of Corruption: Homoeoteleuton.
- Chapter IV - Accidental Causes of Corruption: From Writing in Uncials.
- Chapter V - Accidental Causes of Corruption: Itacism.
- Chapter VI - Accidental Causes of Corruption: Liturgical Influence.

But, most of the corruptions were intentional. This led the Author to analyze these corruptions over eight chapters:

- Chapter VII - Intentional Causes of Corruption: Harmonistic Influence.
- Chapter VIII - Intentional Causes of Corruption: Assimilation.
- Chapter IX - Intentional Causes of Corruption: Attraction.
- Chapter X - Intentional Causes of Corruption: Omission.
- Chapter XI - Intentional Causes of Corruption: Transposition, Substitution & Addition.
- Chapter XII - Intentional Causes of Corruption: Glosses.
- Chapter XIII - Intentional Causes of Corruption: Corruption by Heretics

- Chapter XIV - Intentional Causes of Corruption: Corruption by the Orthodox

In Chapter VII, the Author examined “Harmonistic Influence” as a cause of intentional corruption. In this practice, the scribes intentionally change the texts for several reasons that include:¹³⁹

- to correct and improve the copy of copies before them,
- to make the Holy Scriptures witness to their own peculiar belief,
- to bring the different records into one harmonious narrative, or
- to excise or vary statements in one Gospel which appeared to conflict with parallel statements in another.

In Chapter VIII, the Author discussed “Assimilation” as a cause of intentional corruption.¹⁴⁰ These were incidents in which three of the Gospels gave similar accounts for the incident while the fourth Gospel gave a different account. The scribes were put under the pressure to assimilate the fourth account to become harmonious with the other ones. The examples in this chapter may fall under the motives discussed in Ch. VII, but the Author preferred to put them in a separate chapter.

On Corruption by Heretics (Ch. XIII), the Author wrote:¹⁴¹

“But there remains after all an alarmingly large assortment of textual perturbations which absolutely refuse to fall under any of the heads of classification already enumerated. They are not to be accounted for on any ordinary principle. And this residuum of cases it is, which occasions our present embarrassment. They are in truth so exceedingly numerous; they are often so very considerable; they are, as a rule, so very licentious; they

¹³⁹ Ibid, p. 89.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 100.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, pp. 191-192.

transgress to such an extent all regulations ; they usurp so persistently the office of truth and faithfulness, that we really know not what to think about them. Sometimes we are presented with gross interpolations, apocryphal stories: more often with systematic lacerations of the text, or transformations as from an angel of light.

We are constrained to inquire, how all this can possibly have come about? Have there even been persons who made it their business of set purpose to corrupt the [sacred deposit of Holy Scripture entrusted to the Church for the perpetual illumination of all ages till the Lord should come?"

He went on and named some of the heretics (according to him) who participated in the deliberate corruption of the NT: "... *the heresiarchs Basilides, Valentinus, and Marcion.*"¹⁴²

The Author (evidently, a Catholic) also discussed corruption by the Orthodox. He named several culprits: Beza, Theodotus (of Byzantium) & Photinus.

¹⁴² Ibid, p. 197.

Testimony #12: Hull - Our Bible: Who Wrote It? When-Where-How? Is It Infallible? (1900)

The Author: **Rev. Moses Hull** (1836–1907) was a minister for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the 19th century, who later became a Spiritualist lecturer and author.¹⁴³

The Book: *Our Bible: Who Wrote It? When-Where-How? Is It Infallible? A Voice from the Higher Criticism, a Few Thoughts on Other Bibles* (1900).

In Chapter I, the Author explained that his objective in writing this book is to resolve the confrontational position between those who defends the Bible as the Word of God and those who regard the Bible as the production of a perverse and wicked priesthood: made with the design of deceiving a superstitious and ignorant public.¹⁴⁴

The Author proposes to study the Bible by subjects:¹⁴⁵

“The Bible should be studied by subjects. The Protestant Bible has sixty-six different books in it, with nearly as many authors. The Catholic Bible has eighty books, and several more authors than the Bible commonly used by Protestants.

Every one of these authors has his say on a variety of themes. The only way to arrive at a consensus of Biblical opinion on any subject is to study the Bible by subjects—to find and compare all that each writer in every place, has to say, on any given subject.”

The book is composed of 23 chapters that cover the following topics:

I. Introductory Thoughts - What the Bible Is.

¹⁴³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moses_Hull

¹⁴⁴ Hull (1900), *Our Bible, Who Wrote It?* pp. 15-16.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. 18.

- II. Word of God - What It Is Not and What It Is.
- III. Higher Criticism - What It Is.
- IV. Approach to the Bible.
- V. More Outside Testimony. A Few Things in Genesis.
- VI. Genesis to Joshua.
- VII. Joshua to Job.
- VIII. Job to Isaiah.
- IX. Have the Prediction of the Prophets Been Fulfilled?
- X. Isaiah to Daniel.
- XI. Daniel to End of Old Testament.
- XII. Matthew and Mark.
- XIII. The Gospel According to St. Luke.
- XIV. The Last Gospel.
- XV. Acts of the Apostles.
- XVI. The Epistle to the Romans.
- XVII. First and Second Corinthians.
- XVIII. The Other Suppose Epistles of Paul.
- XIX. The Seven Catholic Epistles.
- XX. The Apocalypse.
- XXI. History of the Canon.
- XXII. Is the Bible God's Revelation?
- XXIII. Other Sacred Books.

The Author questions the claim that the Hebrew Bible was direct inspiration from God for it quotes from many books that were never been seen. These include: The Book of Wars of the Lord, the Book of Jasher, the records of Samuel, the records of Nathan, the records of Gad, the Prophecy of Ahijah and the Visions of Iddo:¹⁴⁶

*14. Wherefore it is said in **the book of the wars of the Lord**, what he did in the Red sea, and in the brooks of Arnon, (Num. 21:14).*

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, pp. 95-96.

13. *And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So, the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. (Josh. 10:13)*

18. *(Also he bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow: behold, it is written in the book of Jasher.) (2 Sam. 1:18).*

29. *Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer, (1 Chron. 29:29).*

29. *Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, first and last, are they not written in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the visions of Iddo the seer against Jeroboam the son of Nebat? (2 Chron. 9:29).*

As for the Pentateuch, Moses could not have given these five books their names because “Genesis,” “Exodus,” “Leviticus,” “Deuteronomy,” are Greek words, and “Number” is Latin; two languages that Moses never spoke. And the Author asserts that: “The scholars of the world are now agreed that Moses was not the author of these books.”¹⁴⁷

The Author discusses the fact that the creation and the flood stories were composed of two contradictory documents (Jehovistic and Elohistic). These stories and similar stories that contradict each other are proofs that they were not written by one writer.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 97.

The Author gives many external testimonies from respected scholars at his time to support the above conclusions; many of them were men of Church, such as: Rev. Heber Newton, Rev. Robert Taylor, Rev. John Chadwick, Mr. Thomas Elwood Longshore, and Mr. Sunderland. For example, here is the testimony of Thomas Elwood Longshore, the Quaker Liberal, as quoted by the Author:

"The story of creation we know is but a fable of Sanskrit origin. There is no other authority of foundation of it. The Pentateuch, or five books of Moses, is but a compilation of Legends loosely and awkwardly put together, with enough of pretended history to connect the different stories, legends and laws to pass among the uncritical, the ignorant and credulous, who are blinded to the absurdities, the contradictions, and the incoherencies, through a reverence for the supernatural and impossible that forbids them to think, to question or to doubt. From the time these books were prepared to the present hour they have been used and accepted as a faith and as a guide for the ignorant believer."¹⁴⁸

The Author then goes deeper in analyzing each book in the Pentateuch to demonstrate that they could not be written by Moses. For example, in Gen. 10:5, we read:

5 By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; everyone after his tongue, after their families, in their nations.
(Gen. 10:5).

Commenting on the above verse, the Author says:

"Now there can be no Gentiles until after the Jews became a nation, and this was not until in the time of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon. Rehoboam was the fourth king of Israel; it was in his day that Israel split off from Judah and set up an independent kingdom. Indeed, with the exception of Judges 4:2, the word Gentiles does not occur again until in

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, pp. 108-109.

*Isaiah 11:10, and the text in Judges was not written until after the writings of the first part of Isaiah."*¹⁴⁹

Another example is in Gen. 12:6 and Gen. 13:7 where we read:

6. And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. (Gen. 12:6).

7. And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land. (Gen. 13:7).

On these two verses, the Author comments:

*"These texts are supposed to apply to Abraham's earliest days. The work of expelling the Canaanites did not begin until in the days of Joshua, not much less than five hundred years after Abraham; and did not end until in the days of David eight hundred years after Abraham. As this text could not have been written while the Canaanite was yet in the land, its writing must date at least four hundred and fifty years after Moses. It is much easier to ascertain who did not write such texts as have been considered than it will be to find who did write them. There are many other things in this book that it is positively certain Moses did not write."*¹⁵⁰

In Gen. 14:14, we read that Abram pursued the people who took his brother captive "... unto Dan." On this the Author says:

"This was not true; nor could it have been written by Moses. Abraham did not pursue his enemies to a city which had no existence; nor could Moses have written of a city which was not founded for more than a century after he left the world. Dan was Jacob's son. Jacob was Abraham's grandson; Dan's great-great-grand-children became a tribe,

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 113.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 114.

*one of the twelve tribes of Israel. This tribe went to a certain city in the land of Canaan—a city by the name of Laish, and destroyed it; afterwards they rebuilt it and changed its name to Dan, which was the name of their tribe..."*¹⁵¹

We move to the Book of Leviticus, to Lev. 18:26-28:

*26 Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations; neither any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourneth among you:
 27 (For all these abominations have the men of the land done, which were before you, and the land is defiled;)
 28 That the land spue not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations that were before you."* (Lev. 18:26-28).

On the above, the Author comments:

*"This was certainly written by someone who was in the land, and had seen the nations spued out before the Children of Israel; Moses never had seen the land, nor had any one to whom he spoke, or for whom he wrote this text. In fact, the nations were not driven out of the land until in the days of David; this, therefore, could not have been written before that period."*¹⁵²

In a similar way, the Books of Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy were analyzed and shown to be written by author(s) other than Moses. The Author again quotes many external testimonies to support his conclusions.

We move to the Book of Joshua to read in the last verse of Ch. 15 the following:

¹⁵¹ Ibid, p. 115.

¹⁵² Ibid, p. 123.

63. *As for the Jebusites the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day. (Josh. 15:63).*

On this, the Author says: "*This was surely not written until after the Jebusites, that is the Jerusalemites gave their challenge to David in II Sam. v. 6-9. David builded the City and fort of David because he found himself unable to take Jerusalem proper.*"¹⁵³

Then in Josh. 24:29-31, we find Joshua, if he is the author of the Book, writes the history of his own death and burial, and records the fact that the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua and the elders that over lived Joshua:¹⁵⁴

29. *And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being an hundred and ten years old.*

30. *And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathserah, which is in mount Ephraim, on the north side of the hill of Gaash.*

31. *And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the Lord, that he had done for Israel. (Josh. 24:29-31).*

In Chapter XXII, the Author gives an answer to the important question: "Is the Bible God's Revelation?" His answer is the following:

"Whatever the books of the Bible, especially those of the Old Testament, may have been for those for whom they were written, they certainly cannot be a revelation to those living today. At best these books

¹⁵³ Ibid, p. 137.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 138.

were only primer books, given to an infantile race, and are not adapted to the people of today. The Old Testament was written in languages, which, perhaps, not a person on earth now understands.

*I believe that it was Geseneus, the great Hebrew Lexicographer, who said, that if Moses' books could have been found in the days of Ezra, or Nehemiah, there was not a man in Israel who could have read and understood them.*¹⁵⁵

*"I might here add that the Hebrew people are not the special people with which to entrust a Divine Revelation. They were the most ignorant people, who, in their day made any pretensions to knowledge or civilization."*¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, p. 387.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 392.

Testimony #13: Remsburg - The Bible. Authenticity, Credibility, Morality (1907).

The Author: **John Eleazer Remsburg** (1848 - 1919) was an ardent religious skeptic in America in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.¹⁵⁷

The Book: *The Bible. I. Authenticity, II. Credibility, III. Morality*, The Truth Seeker Co. (1907).

The book is composed of 34 short chapters distributed evenly between the three themes: Bible Authenticity, Bible Credibility, and Bible Morality. It covers a wide range of topics that fall under the general area of biblical criticism.

One of the interesting topics that the Author discussed in Ch. II is the Canonical and Apocryphal Books of the OT and NT. He showed that these books can be classified into ten groups as follows:¹⁵⁸

- (1) Books accepted as canonical and divine by all Jews and Christians: *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*.
- (2) Books accepted as canonical and divine by a part of the Jews and by all Christians: *Joshua, Judges, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*.
- (3) Books accepted by a part of the Jews as canonical, but not divine; by most Christians as canonical and divine:

¹⁵⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Remsburg

¹⁵⁸ Remsburg (1907) - The Bible ..., pp. 16-18.

Ruth, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Lamentations, Daniel.

(4) Books accepted as canonical by some Jews, and for most part by the Greek and Roman Catholic churches, but rejected by the Protestants: *Baruch, Tobit, Judith, Book of Wisdom, Song of the Three Children, History of Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, Prayer of Manasseh, Ecclesiasticus, 1 Esdras, 2 Esdras, 1 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees, 3 Maccabees, 4 Maccabees, 5 Maccabees.*

(5) Lost books cited by writers of the Bible: *Book of the Wars of the Lord, Book of Jasher, Book of the Covenant, Book of Nathan, Book of Gad, Book of Samuel, Prophecy of Ahijah, Visions of Iddo, Acts of Uzziah, Acts of Solomon, Three Thousand Proverbs of Solomon, A Thousand and Five Songs of Solomon, Chronicles of the Kings of Judah, Chronicles of the Kings of Israel, Book of Jehu, Book of Enoch.*

(6) Books which formed the original canon of the NT and which have always been accepted by Christians: *Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, 1 John.*

(7) Books which are now generally accepted by Christians, but which were for a time rejected: *Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 2 John, 3 John, Jude, Revelation.*

(8) Books now excluded from the canon, but which are found in some of the older manuscripts of the NT: *Shepherd of Hermas, Epistle of Barnabas, 1 Clement, 2 Clement, Paul's Epistle to Laodiceans, Apostolic Constitutions.*

(9) Other Apocryphal books of the NT which are extant: *Gospel of the Infancy, Protevangelion of James, Acts of Pilate, Nativity of Mary, Fifteen Epistles of Ignatius, Epistle of Polycarp, Gospel of Marcion (in part), Clementine Recognitions, Clementine Homilies.*

(10) Apocryphal books of the NT which are lost: *Oracles of Christ, Gospel According to the Hebrews, Gospel According to the Egyptians, Gospel of Peter, Gospel of Paul, Gospel of Philip, Gospel of Matthias, Gospel of Andrew, Gospel of Perfection, Gospel of Tatian, Gospel of Basilides, Gospel of Apelles, Gospel of Cerinthus, Gospel of Bartholomew, Acts of Paul, Acts of Peter, Revelation of Paul, Revelation of Peter, Preaching of Peter, Memoirs of the Apostles.*

The Author discusses in Ch. V the authorship and dates of the different books in the Bible. He includes a table that gives the author's name and date of each book according to orthodox authorities.¹⁵⁹ Then, he gives his opinion regarding the data in the table:¹⁶⁰

"The names and dates given in the foregoing table are, with a few exceptions, paraded as established facts. And yet the greater portion of them are mere assumptions, without even the shadow of proof upon which to base them. Many of them are self-evidently false—are contradicted by the contents of the books themselves. The authorship of at least fifty books of the Bible—thirty in the Old Testament and twenty in the New—is unknown.

These books are not as old as claimed. The books of the Old Testament, instead of having been written from 1520 to 420 B.C., were probably written from 1000 to 100 B.C. The books of the New Testament, instead

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, pp. 46-48.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 48.

of having all been written in the first century, were, many of them, not written until the second century."

Next, over the next six chapters, the Author analyzed in some depth the authorships and dates of the different books. These include the following:

- The Pentateuch (Ch. VI),
- The Prophets (Ch. VII),
- The Hagiographa (Ch. VIII),
- The Four Gospels (Ch. IX),
- Acts, Catholic Epistles, and Revelation (Ch. X), and
- Pauline Epistles (Ch. XI).

We look briefly at the analysis of the four Gospels in Ch. IX. The Author presents his arguments and evidences that prove that all these Gospels were written by anonymous writers. He sums up his conclusion in the following:¹⁶¹

"The principal reason for rejecting both the reputed authorship and the credibility of the Four Gospels is the contradictory character of their contents. If Jesus Christ was a historical personage, as Christians believe, these alleged biographies were not written by his Apostles and their companions; neither were they compiled from authentic records.

The Greek text of the Gospels disproves their authenticity. Their assigned authors, or two of them at least, were unlearned Jews. Their work was confined chiefly to the lower classes of their countrymen, in a land where Greek was almost unknown..."

The Author brings in many external witnesses to support his case. For example, Rev. Dr. Hooykaas, a noted theologian and critic of

¹⁶¹ Ibid, p. 136.

Holland, voices his own opinion and the opinions of his renowned associates, Dr. Kuenen and Dr. Oort, in the following:¹⁶²

"Our interest is more especially excited by the five historical books of the New Testament. If we might really suppose them to have been written by the men whose names they bear, we could never be thankful enough for such precious authorities. . . . But, alas! not one of these five books was really written by the person whose name it bears—though for the sake of brevity we shall still call the writers Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—and they are all of more recent date than their headings would lead us to suppose. . . . We cannot say that the Gospels and the book of Acts are unauthentic, for not one of them professes to give the name of its author. They appeared anonymously. The titles placed above them in our Bibles owe their origin to a later ecclesiastical tradition which deserves no confidence whatever"

We move now to Part II of the book in which the Author analyzes the credibility of the Bible over 13 chapters:

- Textual Errors (Ch. XII),
- Two Cosmogonies of Genesis (Ch. XIII),
- The Patriarchal Age (Ch. XIV),
- The Jewish Kings (Ch. XV),
- When Did Jehoshaphat Dir? (Ch. XVI),
- Inspired Numbers (Ch. XVII),
- Harmony of the Gospels (Ch. XVIII),
- Paul and the Apostles (Ch. XIX),
- The Bible and History (Ch. XX),
- The Bible and Science (Ch. XXI),
- Prophecies (Ch. XXII),
- Miracles (Ch. XXIII), and
- The Bible God (Ch. XXIV).

¹⁶² In "Bible for Learners, Vol. III., p. 24."

In Chapter XXI, titled "The Bible and Science", the Author gives ample evidence to demonstrate the contradictions between the Bible and science. These contradictions cover different areas of science: astronomy, geology, geography, botany, zoology, ethnology, physiology, chemistry, physics, and mathematics.

We look below at few examples of the scientific contradictions and impossibilities in the Bible as reported by the Author. In each case, the verse from the Bible is shown and underneath it the comment of the Author in **Bold**.

13. I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. (Gen. 9:13).

The Bible writer did not know that it was the refraction and reflection of the sun's rays on the drops of water which produced the prismatic colors of the rainbow; he did not know that the phenomenon was as old as rain and sunshine, but believed it to be a postdiluvian sign thrown on the dark canvas of clouds by the Almighty.¹⁶³

8. "Behold, I [the Lord] will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. So, the sun returned ten degrees" (Isaiah 38:8).

The Bible teaches the geocentric theory that the sun revolves around the earth; Science teaches the heliocentric theory that the earth revolves around the sun.¹⁶⁴

43. "And all the first-born males [of Israel] . . . were twenty and two thousand two hundred and three score and thirteen" (Num. 3:43).

¹⁶³ Remsburg (1907) - The Bible ..., p. 288.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 273.

As the population of Israel was about 3,000,000, this would give 130 persons to each family and an average of 128 children to each mother. Faith may accept this, but physiological science rejects it.¹⁶⁵

4 Nevertheless these shall ye not eat of them that chew the cud, or of them that divide the hoof: as the camel, because he chewed the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you.

5. And the coney, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you.

6. And the hare, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you.

7. And the swine, though he divide the hoof, and be clovenfooted, yet he cheweth not the cud; he is unclean to you.

8. Of their flesh shall ye not eat, and their carcase shall ye not touch; they are unclean to you. (Lev. 11:4-8).

Every statement proclaims the writer's ignorance of the simple facts of Zoology. The camel does divide the hoof; the coney does not chew the cud; the hare does not chew the cud; the swine is not cloven-footed (bisulcate), but four-toed.¹⁶⁶

"The words which Moses spake unto all Israel ..." (Deut. 1:1).

"And Moses called all Israel and said unto them ..." (Deut. 5:1).

"There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel" (Josh. 8:35). Nature's temple must have possessed wonderful acoustic properties to enable Moses and Joshua to reach the ears of a multitude of three million.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 286.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, pp. 281-282.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, pp. 288-289.

In Part III, the Author examines the Morality of the Bible over 9 chapters. Without going into much details, it suffices to say that the Author categorically rejects the Morality of the Bible. Here is his judgement on this matter:¹⁶⁸

"I refuse to accept the Bible as a moral guide because it sanctions nearly every vice and crime. Here is the long list of wrongs which it authorizes and defends:

1. *Lying and Deception.*
2. *Cheating.*
3. *Theft and Robbery.*
4. *Murder.*
5. *Wars of Conquest.*
6. *Human Sacrifices.*
7. *Cannibalism.*
8. *Witchcraft.*
9. *Slavery.*
10. *Polygamy.*
11. *Adultery and Prostitution.*
12. *Obscenity.*
13. *Intemperance.*
14. *Vagrancy.*
15. *Ignorance.*
16. *Injustice to Woman.*
17. *Unkindness to Children.*
18. *Cruelty to Animals.*
19. *Tyranny.*
20. *Intolerance and Persecution."*

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 337.

Testimony #14: West - Impeachment of the Bible (1923).

The Author: **Colonel Emory Scott West.**

The Book: *Impeachment of the Bible; A Brief Offering the Bible in Evidence in the Cause; Twenties Century Intelligence vs. Ignorance and Superstition.* (1923).

The book is composed of six chapters:

1. Introduction
2. Bible Contradictions
3. Absurd Stories
4. The Bible and Science
5. Immorality of the Bible
6. Concluding Remarks

In Chapter 2, "Bible Contradiction", the Author includes tens of cases to demonstrate the contradictions in the Bible. Here are a few examples:¹⁶⁹

- Does God require rest?

"On the seventh day he rested and was refreshed." Exodus 31:17

"The everlasting God, the Lord, fainteth not, neither is weary." Isiah 40:28

- Is God omnipotent?

"With God all things are possible." Matthew 19:26.

"He drove out the inhabitants of the mountain, but he could not drive the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron."

Judges 1:19.

¹⁶⁹ West (1923) - *Impeachment of the Bible*, p. 7.

- Was it God or Satan who moved David to number Israel?
"And again, the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go number Israel." II Samuel 24:1.
"And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel." I Chronicles 21:1.
- Who was the father of Joseph?
"And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus" Matthew 1:16
"And Jesus, being the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli." Luke 3:23

In the “Absurd Stories” chapter, the Author discusses the following cases:¹⁷⁰

- The story of creation.
- The creation of Eve from Adam’s rib.
- The talking serpent.
- The Quail story.
- Balaam’s Ass
- Johan and the Whale
- Exploits of Samson
- Joshua’s war feats
- John’s nightmare

In Chapter 4, “The Bible and Science”, the Author examines many of the Bible’s contradictions to scientific facts in the fields of astronomy, geology, geography, botany, zoology, ethnology, physiology, chemistry, physics and mathematics. Examples of these contradictions include the following:¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 25.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, p. 38.

- The creation of the earth before the creation of sun, moon and stars.
- The creation of vegetation before the sun.
- Joshua miracle of making the sun and the moon stay stand still.
- Talking serpent and talking ass.
- Calling the hazel and chestnut trees (Gen. 30:37), and the chestnut trees (Ez. 31:8).
- Building an ark with one small opening for ventilation.
- How the earth dried after Noah's flood? Where did all the water go?
- Burning the golden calf until it becomes powder (Ex. 32:20).
- The world is stable and not moving (II Chron. 16:30).

Chapter 4, also, includes a section entitled "Prophecies". It lists many prophecies that were not fulfilled:¹⁷²

"Babylon shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation: wild beast of the desert shall lie there," etc. Isaiah 13:19-22. (Not fulfilled.)

"Behold, Damascus, it is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap." Isaiah 17:1. (Still a flourishing city.)

"Thus saith the Lord, I will bring Tyrus Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, with horses and chariots, and with horsemen, and with companies, and much people. He shall slay with the sword thy daughters in the field," etc., Ezekiel 17:7-14. (Not fulfilled.)

"I will make the land of Egypt utterly waste and desolate." Ezekiel 29:10-12. (Not fulfilled.)

"Jeroboam shall die by the sword." Amos 7:11. (Not fulfilled.)

¹⁷² Ibid, pp. 45-46.

II Kings 14:27-29, completely disagrees with Amos.

"As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another." Luke 21:6. (This prophecy was written at least a hundred years after the destruction of Jerusalem.)"

In the "Morality" chapter, the Author includes numerous cases that reveals the immorality of the Bible when it glorifies the acts of: lying, cheating, stealing, slavery, intemperance, vagrancy, ignorance, tyranny, intolerance, injustice to women, unkindness to children, cruelty to animals, witchcraft, human sacrifice, cannibalism, murder and war, polygamy, adultery and obscenity.¹⁷³

Here are few examples of "Human Sacrifice" incidents:¹⁷⁴

"Notwithstanding no devoted thing, that a man shall devote unto the Lord of all that he hath, both of man and of beast, and of the field of his possessions, shall be sold or redeemed ; every devoted thing is most holy unto the Lord. None devoted, which shall be devoted of men, shall be redeemed; but shall surely be put to death." Leviticus 27:28, 29.

"Then the spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah, and Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering."

Jephthah was victor in the battle with the children of Ammon; the Lord delivered them into his hands, and upon his return to his house, his daughter, his only child came out to meet him. "And he did with her

¹⁷³ Ibid, p. 49.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, pp. 67-68.

according to his vow. And it was a custom in Israel." For the full account of this case of human sacrifice, read, Judges 11:29-40.

"Let seven men of his sons be delivered unto us, and we will hang them up unto the Lord. And they hanged them in the hill before the Lord." II Samuel 21:6-9.

Here are examples of "Cannibalism" incidents:¹⁷⁵

"And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat." Leviticus. 26:29.

"And thou shall eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the Lord thy God hath given thee."
Deuteronomy 28:53-57.

"This woman said unto me, give thy son, that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow. So, we boiled my son, and did eat him." II Kings 6:26-29.

"And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons, and the flesh of their daughters, and they shall eat every one the flesh of his friend."
Jeremiah 19:9.

"The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children; they have their meet in the destruction of the daughters of my people."
Lamentations 4:10.

"Therefore, the fathers shall eat the sons in the midst of thee, and the sons shall eat the fathers." Ezekiel 5:10.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, pp. 68-69.

"Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in ye."
John 6:53.

Testimony #15: Sunderland - Origin and Character of the Bible (1924).

The Author: **Jabez Thomas Sunderland** (1842-1936) was a Unitarian minister and reformer.¹⁷⁶

The Book: *Origin and the Character of the Bible, and Its Place Among Sacred Books*, 6e, The Beacon Press (1924).

The book is composed of twenty-seven chapters, and it discusses a multitude of topics related to the origin and character of the Bible. Almost all the topics discussed in the book have been discussed before in earlier publications that appeared in the 100 year that preceded the publication date of the book. However, this book is still very valuable for it takes into consideration the progress made in biblical studies until the end of WWI.

Chapter V carries this title: "The Pentateuch: Was It Written by Moses?"

The Author's answer is a firm "No", and he includes the following quotation from a prominent conservative scholar:

*"With very few exceptions anywhere, and with almost no exceptions in those places where the Old Testament is studied with most freedom and breadth of learning, the whole world of scholars has abandoned the ancient tradition that the Pentateuch, in such form as we now have it, was the work of Moses."*¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ <https://uudb.org/articles/jabezsunderland.html>

¹⁷⁷ Ladd (1888) - What is the Bible, pp. 299-230.

He further asserts that the idea that 'Moses was the author of the Pentateuch' is simply a tradition, and a late one at that, having no historic basis.

Next, the Author, over the following 11 chapters, analyzes each book in the Old Testament and in the New Testament examining the book's character and its origin.

On the Pentateuch's character and real origin, the Author summarizes the issues that are now settled. These include the following important points:¹⁷⁸

1. That the work is composite.
2. That it is made up in large part of different "documents" (the J, E, D, and P documents.)
3. That these documents are traceable throughout almost the entire Pentateuch.
4. That those most easily traced and of prime importance are four in number.
5. That Deuteronomy was written earlier (not later, as has been generally supposed) than any other of the five books as we have them.
6. That the Pentateuchal legislation, at least in the elaborate form in which it comes to us, was the last written part of the Pentateuch.

The Pentateuch contains the history of the Israelite people. But as we go back in time, historical data starts to mingle with legends and myth until all the stories about ancient times become pure myths and legends. The Author includes a quotation from Kuenen who wrote:

¹⁷⁸ Sunderland (1924) - *Origin and Character of the Bible*, p. 69.

*"It is most clearly evident, that the Old Testament narratives of Israel's earliest fortunes are entirely upon a par with the accounts which other nations have handed down to us concerning their early history. That is to say, their principal element is legend. The remembrance of the great men and of the important events of antiquity was preserved by posterity. Transmitted from mouth to mouth, it gradually lost its accuracy and precision, and adopted all sorts of foreign elements. The principal characteristics which legend shows among other ancient nations are found also among the Israelites."*¹⁷⁹

Kuenen claims that the historical period among the Hebrew people cannot be carried back with any certainty beyond the eighth, or, at most, the ninth, century B.C.:

*"The great question now is, with what period are we to begin? As early as possible, of course. But how far back can we go with safety? The answer, which perhaps will surprise some, must be not further than the eighth century before our era (800-700 B.C.) ... Why not have started from the ninth, or even the tenth or eleventh century, the time of David and Solomon? The answer may be guessed: because from those times we possess no written memorials, or none that are sufficiently guaranteed, or an insufficient number."*¹⁸⁰

We jump over the Author's analysis to each book in the Bible and fast forward to Ch. XVII where he discusses the formation of the Canon: The Old Testament Canon and the New Testament Canon.

The formation of the Hebrew Canon was a slow and gradual process, but it was a relatively straightforward. It is composed of three parts:

¹⁷⁹ Kuenen - Religion of Israel, p. 22.

¹⁸⁰ Sunderland (1924) - Origin and Character of the Bible, pp. 191-193.

- The Law - which is the five books of the Pentateuch, the Books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy - canonized in the year 444 B.C.
- The Prophets - containing the Books of Joshua, Judges, First and Second Samuel, First and Second Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve minor prophets - canonized in the year 250 B.C.
- The Hagiographa - composed of those books of our Old Testament not included in the Law or the Prophets; namely, Psalms, Proverbs, Job, the Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and First and Second Chronicles - canonized around the year 100 B.C.

The process of the formation of the New Testament Canon, however, was cruel and painful. The age which produced the New Testament Canon was an imperfect age that was bound to produce an imperfect outcome. It was characterized by the following:

“One fact alone, when we come duly to consider it, makes it impossible for us to think of the age which gives us our New Testament Canon as one capable of any other than imperfect work in such a direction... [an age in] which men accepted whatever they desired to accept, upon the smallest modicum of evidence, or even with no real evidence at all... in which the science of criticism as developed by the moderns the science which scrutinizes statements, balances evidence for and against, and sifts the true from the false did not exist; an age when a boundless credulity disposed men to believe in wonders as readily as in ordinary events, requiring no stronger proof in the case of the former than sufficed to establish the latter, viz., hearsay and vulgar report; an age when literary honesty was a virtue almost unknown, and when, consequently, literary forgeries were as common as genuine productions, and transcribers of sacred books did not scruple to alter the text in the interest of personal views and doctrinal prepossessions...”

The exact principles that guided the formation of a Canon cannot be discovered. Definite grounds for the reception or rejection of books were not very clearly apprehended. The choice was determined by various circumstances. The development was pervaded by no critical or definite principle. No member of the synod [that might be at any time engaged in considering the subject of what books ought to be regarded as canonical] exercised his critical faculty; a number would decide such matters summarily. Bishops proceeded in the track of tradition or authority.

Moreover, a great deal of bigotry and partisanship and bad blood was manifested from first to last. Bishops freely accused bishops of forgery of sacred writings and of alteration of the oldest texts; and, altogether, the debates and proceedings of the synods and councils that had part in settling the Canon remind one very much of some of the worst political conventions of our day.”¹⁸¹

The attempt to develop a New Testament Canon started early at the Council of Laodicea (363 C.E.) but this process was not finalized until the relatively modern Council of Trent that was held from 1545 to 1563:

“Indeed, the Romanists allow that the Canon was not settled until the modern Council of Trent, held from 1545 to 1563, in the midst of the German Reformation. This council proceeded to pass a formal decree declaring what books properly belong in the Bible. The list is that of our present Protestant Bible, with the addition of the fourteen books of the Old Testament Apocrypha. The Romanists, therefore, with their theory that their church is infallible in its decisions, may well claim to have an authoritative scripture Canon. But there can be no ground for such claim on the part of Protestants.”¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ Ibid, pp. 195-196.

¹⁸² Ibid, p. 197.

The Reformation champions, Luther and Zwingli, were particularly critical of the New Testament Canon:

"Luther was decidedly of the opinion that our present Canon is imperfect. He thought that the Old Testament Book of Esther did not belong in the Bible. On the other hand, in translating the Old Testament, he translated the apocryphal books of Judith, Wisdom, Tobit, Sirach, Baruch, First and Second Maccabees, and the Prayer of Manasseh. In his prefaces he gives his judgment concerning these books. With regard to First Maccabees, he thinks it almost equal to the other books of Holy Scripture, and not unworthy to be reckoned among them. Of Wisdom, he says he was long in doubt whether it should be numbered among the canonical books; and of Sirach he says that it is a right good book, proceeding from a wise man. He had judgments equally decided regarding certain New Testament books. He thought the Epistle to the Hebrews came neither from Paul nor any of the apostles and was not to be put on an equality with Epistles written by apostles themselves. The Apocalypse (or Revelation) he considered neither apostolic nor prophetic, and of little or no worth. He did not believe the Epistle of Jude proceeded from an apostle. James' Epistle he pronounced unapostolic, and "an epistle of straw."

The great Swiss reformer Zwingli maintained that the Apocalypse is not properly a biblical book. Even Calvin did not think that Paul was the author of Hebrews, or Peter of the book called Second Peter; while as to the Book of Revelation, he denounced it as unintelligible, and prohibited the pastors of Geneva from all attempts at interpreting it."¹⁸³

Finally, in this review, we come to the important question: "Is the Bible infallible?"

The Author answers this question over two chapters: Ch. XXIV & Ch. XXV. His conclusion is that the Bible is not infallible because it

¹⁸³ Ibid, p. 198.

contains several things that are impossible to reconcile with the theory of Infallibility.¹⁸⁴

1. **The Doctrine of Infallibility not Found in the Bible.** The Bible itself does not claim to be free from error.
2. **Contradictions in the Bible.** Both Testaments contain numerous contradictions.
3. **Different Forms of the Ten Commandments.** Every careful student of the Bible knows that the Ten Commandments are given not only in three different places in the Old Testament, but in two different forms so different, that one cannot possibly be identified with the other.
4. **Things Absurd.** The Bible contains many things intrinsically absurd.
5. **Historical Mistakes.** The Bible contains accounts and statements not historically correct.
6. **Scientific Errors.**
7. **Exaggerations.** The Bible contains evident exaggerations.
8. **Childish Representations of God.** The Bible contains representations of God which, in the light of such teachings as those of Jesus, we cannot do otherwise than regard as childish.
9. **Morally Degrading Representations of God.** No candid reader of the Bible can deny that it contains representations of God according to which he is not a morally perfect being.
10. **Inculcation of what is Wrong.** There are many places where the Old Testament both directly and indirectly not only sanctions but inculcates what is wrong.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, pp. 260-283.

Testimony #16: Wheless - Forgery in Christianity (1930).

The Author: **Joseph Wheless** (1830-1899) was an American Lawyer. He was raised Southern Methodist but later questioned the verity of the scriptures, studying their sources in detail. As a lawyer he defended American free-thinking and atheist organizations, was instructor in military jurisprudence at the University of Arkansas and held the rank of major in the department of the Judge Advocate General.¹⁸⁵

The Book: *Forgery in Christianity. A Documented Record of the Foundations of the Christian Religion*, Alfred A. Knopf (1930)

The book is composed of a “Foreword” and seven chapters:

Foreword:

- I. Pagan Frauds - Christian Precedents
- II. Hebrew Holy Forgeries
- III. Christian "Scripture" Forgeries
- IV. The Saintly "Fathers" of the Faith
- V. The "Gospel" Forgeries
- VI. The Church Forgery Mill
- VII. The "Triumph" of Christianity

Our witness in this testimony is a lawyer himself. So, in the “Foreword” section of the book he presents an Indictment that is composed of seven articles:

“I charge, and purpose to prove, from unimpeachable texts and historical records, and by authoritative clerical confessions, beyond the possibility of denial, evasion, or refutation:

¹⁸⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Wheless

1. *That the Bible, in its every Book, and in the strictest legal and moral sense, is a huge forgery.*
2. *That every Book of the New Testament is a forgery of the Christian Church ; and every significant passage in those Books, on which the fabric of the Church and its principal Dogmas are founded, is a further and conscious later forgery, wrought with definite fraudulent intent.*
3. *Especially, and specifically, that the "famous Petrine text"- "Upon this Rock I will build my church" the cornerstone of the gigantic fabric of imposture, and the other, "Go, teach all nations," were never uttered by the Jew Jesus, but are palpable and easily proven late Church forgeries.*
4. *That the Christian Church, from its inception in the first little Jewish-Christian religious societies until it reached the apex of its temporal glory and moral degradation! was a vast and tireless Forgery-mill.*
5. *That the Church was founded upon, and through the Dark Ages of Faith has battened on (yet languishes decadently upon) monumental and petty forgeries and pious frauds, possible only because of its own shameless mendacity and through the crass ignorance and superstition of the sodden masses of its deluded votaries, purposely kept in that base condition for purposes of ecclesiastical graft and aggrandizement through conscious and most unconscionable imposture.*
6. *That every conceivable form of religious lie, fraud and imposture has ever been the work of Priests ; and through all the history of the Christian Church, as through all human history, has been and, so far as they have not been shamed out of it by skeptical ridicule and exposure, yet is, the age-long stock in trade and sole means of existence of the priests and ministers of all the religions.*
7. *That the clerical mind, which "reasons in chains," is, from its vicious and vacuous "education," and' the special selfish interests of the priestly class, incapable either of the perception or the*

utterance of truth, in matters where the interests of priestcraft are concerned."¹⁸⁶

He then proceeds to define "Forgery" in legal and moral sense:

*"Forgery, in legal and moral sense, is the utterance or publication, with intent to deceive or defraud, or to gain some advantage, of a false document, put out by one person in the name of and as the genuine work of another, who did not execute it, or the subsequent alteration of a genuine document by one who did not execute the original. This species of falsification extends alike to all classes of writings, promissory notes, the coin or currency of the realm, to any legal or private document, or to a book. All are counterfeit or forged if not authentic and untampered."*¹⁸⁷

On the "Hebrew Holy Forgeries" (Ch. II), the Author presents the following cases as examples of forgeries:

1- The holy Hebrew Canon was closed by Ezra about 444 B.C. Yet, the Christian Church added several apocryphal books to produce what is known as the Christian Old Testament. The term "apocrypha" means pious forgeries.¹⁸⁸

The Author lists the books that are apocryphal and not included in the Hebrew Old Testament:¹⁸⁹

"... Tobit, Judith, Baruch, with the Epistle of Jeremiah, Wisdom of Solomon, Wisdom of Jesus son of Sirach (or Ecclesiasticus), I and II Maccabees, Prayer of Manasseh, Additions to Esther, and Additions to the Book of Daniel, consisting of the Prayer of Azarias, the Song of the Three Holy Children (in the Fiery Furnace) , the History of Susannah, the History of Bel and the Dragon, and sundry such precious fables. These are

¹⁸⁶ Wheless (1930) - Forgery in Christianity, pp. xviii-xix.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, p. xxi.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, p. 45-48.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, p. 50.

all included in the Greek Septuagint and in the Latin Vulgate, were read as Scripture in the early Christian Church, and were declared by the Council of Trent, at its Fourth Session, in 1546, under the Curse of God on all skeptical doubters, to be "inspired and canonical"; and they are so held by the Roman, and some of the Greek and Oriental Catholic Churches, but are declared "apocrypha" and forged by Jewry and all the rest of Christendom."

In addition to the above, there are other Jewish apocrypha that include: "Third Esdras," and "Fourth Esdras."

2- There exists a large number of apocryphal books and documents that can be classified as follows:¹⁹⁰

- Apocrypha of Jewish origin;
- Jewish apocrypha with Christian accretions;
- Apocrypha of Christian origin, comprising of:
 - Apocryphal Gospels;
 - Pilate literature and other apocrypha concerning Christ;
 - Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles;
 - Apocryphal doctrinal works;
 - Apocryphal Epistles;
 - Apocryphal Apocalypses;
- Apocrypha and the Church.

3- The Author gives a list of more Hebrew sacred forgeries:¹⁹¹
"Life of Adam and Eve; Testament of Adam; The Book of Creation; the Books of Seth (son of Adam); Book of Enoch (grandson of Adam); Secrets of Enoch; Parables of Enoch; Book of Lamech; Book of Noah; Book of Zoroaster (identified with Ham, son of Noah); Apocalypse of Noah; Apocalypse of Abraham; Testament of Abraham; Testament of Isaac;

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, p. 49.

¹⁹¹ Ibid, pp. 66-67.

Testament of Jacob; The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs; Testament of the Three Patriarchs; Testament of Naphthali; The Prayer of Menasseh; The Prayer of Joseph; The Story of Asenath (wife of Joseph); Prayer of Asenath; The Marriage of Asenath; The Assumption of Moses; The Testament of Moses; Book of Jannes and Mambres (the Egyptian magicians with whom Moses contended); Penitence of Jannes and Mambres; The Magical Books of Moses; The Book of Jubilees, or Little Genesis; Book of Og the Giant; Treatise of the Giants; Josippon; Book of Jasher; The Liber Antiquitatem Bibliarum, ascribed to Philo; The Chronicles of Jerameel; Testament of Job; Psalm CLI of David, "when he fought with Goliath"; Testament of Solomon; The Contradictio Salomonis (a contest in wisdom between Solomon and Hiram); The Psalms of Solomon; Apocalypse of Elijah; Apocalypse of Baruch; The Rest of the Words of Baruch; History of Daniel; Apocalypse of Daniel; Visions of Daniel; Additions to Daniel, viz.: The History of Susanna, the Song of the Three Children, Story of Bel and the Dragon; Tobit; Judith; Additions to Esther; The Martyrdom of Isaiah; The Ascension of Isaiah; III and IV Esdras; Apocalypse of Esdras; Story of the Three Pagans, in I Esdras; I, II, III, and IV Maccabees; The Prophecy of Eldad and Medad; Apocalypse of Zephaniah; Stories of Artaphanus; Eupolemus; Story of Aphikia, wife of Jesus Sirach; The Letter of Aristeas to Philocrates; The Sibylline Oracles."

4- The “Septuagint” translation into Greek. This translation was so unreliable and inaccurate, and imported innumerable errors into the Christian religion which was based upon and propagated for several centuries only through the Septuagint texts. The spurious character of this translation was finally revealed in the sixteenth century by the nascent modern criticism.¹⁹²

¹⁹² Ibid, pp. 59-60.

We now fast forward to the “Gospel” Forgeries (Ch. V.) The Author reports several examples to the forgeries related to the Gospels that include the following:

1- These Four Gospels are themselves forgeries and apocryphal "in the sinister sense of bearing names to which they have no right." This fact is asserted by the Catholic Encyclopedia which says:

*"The first four historical books of the New Testament are supplied with titles (Gospel According to Matthew, According to Mark, etc.) which, however ancient, do not go back to the respective authors of those sacred writings... That, however, they do not go back to the first century of the Christian era, or at least that they are not original, is a position generally held at the present day. ... It thus appears that the titles of the Gospels are not traceable to the Evangelists themselves."*¹⁹³

2- There are many clues that prove that the Four Gospels were all forgeries:

- i. These Gospels were not written nor in existence for over a century after the supposed Apostles.¹⁹⁴ No written Gospels existed until shortly before 185 A.D.
- ii. The “Apostolic” authors of these Gospels were all Jews. However, the Gospels were written in Greek. The Apostles were all unlearned peasants speaking a vulgar Aramaic-Jewish dialect, could neither speak nor write Greek.¹⁹⁵
- iii. Traditionally, Jesus and all the Apostles were Jews; all their associates and the people of their country with whom they came into contact, were Jews. But throughout the Gospels, scores of times, "the Jews" are spoken of, always as a

¹⁹³ Catholic Encyclopedia - Vol. vi, p. 656.

¹⁹⁴ Wheless (1930) - Forgery in Christianity, p. 183.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, pp. 184-185.

distinct and alien people from the writers, and mostly with a sense of racial hatred and contempt.¹⁹⁶

The Author quotes the results of critical study of the four Gospels as recorded by the Encyclopedia Biblica:¹⁹⁷

"As to Matthew: "The employment of various sources, the characteristic difference of the quotations from the LXX (Septuagint) and the original (Hebrew), the indefiniteness of the determinations of time and place, the incredibleness of the contents, the introduction of later conditions, as also the artificial arrangement, and so forth, have long since led to the conclusion that for the authorship of the first Gospel the apostle Matthew must be given up.

As to Mark: "According to Papias, the second gospel was written by Mark. ... In what Papias says the important point is not so much the statement that Mark wrote the gospel as the further statement that Peter supplied the contents orally. ... The supposition that the gospel is essentially a repetition of oral communications by Peter, will at once fall to the ground. ... Should Mark have written in Aramaic, then he cannot be held to have been the author of canonical Mark, which is certainly not a translation, nor yet, in view of the LXX quotations which have passed over into all three gospels, can he be held to have been the author of the original Mark."

As to Luke: "This tradition [that Luke was the author of the third gospel and of Acts] cannot be traced farther back than towards the end of the second century (Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and the Muratorian fragment). ... It has been shown that it is impossible to regard Luke with any certainty as the writer even of the 'we' sections of Acts, not to speak of the whole book of Acts, or of the Third Gospel. ... If Luke

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, p. 185.

¹⁹⁷ Encyclopedia Biblica (1891) - Vol. II, (Topic: Gospels).

cannot have been the author of Acts, neither can he have been the author of the Third Gospel."

As to John: "No mention of the Fourth Gospel which we can recognize as such carries us further than to 140 A. D. As late as 152, Justin, who nevertheless lays so great value upon the 'Memorabilia of the Apostles,' regards John if indeed he knows it at all with distrust and appropriates from it a very few sayings. ... If on independent grounds some period shortly before 140 A. D. can be set down as the approximate date of the production of the gospel [a certain statement in it is explained], ... The Apostolic authorship of the gospel remains impossible, and that not merely from the consideration that it cannot be the son of Zebedee who has introduced himself as writer in so remarkable a fashion, but also from the consideration that it cannot be an eye-witness of the facts of the life of Jesus who has presented, as against the synoptists, an account so much less credible, nor an original apostle who has shown himself so readily accessible to Alexandrian and Gnostic ideas, nor a contemporary of Jesus who survived so late into the second century and yet was capable of composing so profound a work."

Testimony #17: Ehrman - The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture (1993).

The Author: **Bart D. Ehrman** (1955-) is an American New Testament scholar focusing on textual criticism of the New Testament, the historical Jesus, the origins and development of early Christianity.¹⁹⁸

The Book: *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture. The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the NT*, Oxford Univ. Press (1993).

The is the first testimony from this expert witness and it relates to the Corruption of the New Testament (NT). The other testimony is Testimony#22 and it relates to the authorship of the NT.

The Author starts the first paragraph of the “Introduction” by this statement:

“This is a book about texts and their transmission, about the words of the emerging New Testament and how they came to be changed by scribes of the early Christian centuries. My thesis can be stated simply: scribes occasionally altered the words of their sacred texts to make them more patently orthodox and to prevent their misuse by Christians who espoused aberrant views.”¹⁹⁹

The book examines four types of corruptions of scripture:

- Anti-Adoptionistic Corruptions of Scripture (Ch. 2),
- Anti-Separationist Corruptions of Scripture (Ch. 3),
- Anti-Docetic Corruptions of Scripture (Ch. 4), and
- Anti-Patripassianist Corruptions of Scripture (Ch. 5).

¹⁹⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bart_D._Ehrman

¹⁹⁹ Ehrman (1993) - The Orthodox Corruption ..., p. xi.

Adoptionism is a minority Christian belief that Jesus was born merely human and that he became divine—adopted as God's son—later in his life. By these accounts, Jesus earned the title Christ through his sinless devotion to the will of God, rather than be his pre-existent status as the eternally begotten Son of God.²⁰⁰ Adoptionism arose among early Christians seeking to reconcile the claims that Jesus was the Son of God with the monotheism of Judaism, in which the concept of a trinity of divine persons in one Godhead was unacceptable.

To counter Adoptionism, the scribes who copied the NT altered passages that might suggest that Jesus had a human father, or that he came into existence at his birth, or that he was adopted to be the Son of God at his baptism. They changed other passages to accentuate their own views that Jesus was divine, that he pre-existed, and that his mother was a virgin. In each of these textual corruptions we can detect the anonymous workings of orthodox scribes, who through their transcriptions have left us a record of the far-flung impact of the theological controversies of their day.

For example, in Luke 2:48, Jesus' mother finds him in the Temple and upbraids him by saying, "Look, your father and I have been grieved, searching for you." This text has been changed in one important but fragmentary Greek witness of the fifth century and two Old Latin manuscripts to read "Your relatives and I have been grieved ..."; while a number of ancient versional witnesses read simply "We have been grieved ...".²⁰¹

According to separationist Christologies, Christ was one of the divine aeons of the Pleroma, who entered into the man Jesus at his

²⁰⁰ See for example: <https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Adoptionism>

²⁰¹ Ehrman (1993) - The Orthodox Corruption ..., p. 56.

baptism, through whom he conveyed salvific gnosis to the disciples during his public ministry, and from whom he departed at some time prior to the crucifixion.

An example of the corruption to counter separationist Christologies is in 1 John 4:3. In the majority of manuscripts, 1 John 4:3 reads "every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God..." Other witnesses, however, as early as the second century, read "every spirit that looses (or "separates") Jesus is not from God..." Despite the widespread endorsement of this less attested reading, there are compelling reasons to reject it as a corruption of the text, made in direct opposition to Gnostic Christologies that "separated" (or "loosed") Jesus from the Christ.²⁰²

Docetism is broadly defined as any teaching that claims that Jesus' body was either absent or illusory. Two varieties were widely known. In one version, as in Marcionism, Christ was so divine that he could not have been human, since God lacked a material body, which therefore could not physically suffer. Jesus only appeared to be a flesh-and-blood man; his body was a phantasm. Other groups who were accused of Docetism held that Jesus was a man in the flesh, but Christ was a separate entity who entered Jesus's body in the form of a dove at his baptism, empowered him to perform miracles, and abandoned him upon his death on the cross.

An example of Anti-Docetic corruption is found in John 19:18: "Jesus, knowing that everything was already finished, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, 'I am thirsty'" A third-century papyrus, however, omits the 'in order..' clause. In this witness, when Jesus says he is thirsty, it is no longer "in order to fulfill the Scripture." In other words, a complete clause was omitted.²⁰³

²⁰² Ibid, p. 125.

²⁰³ Ibid, p. 194.

Patriginianism is the doctrine that denies the distinct personhood of the Trinity and asserts that God the Father became incarnate and suffered for man's redemption.

As an example of Anti-Patriginianism corruption, some scribes of Acts 20:28 modified the phrase "the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood" to read "the church of the Lord, which he purchased with his own blood."²⁰⁴

Due to the existence of a multitude of Christological views, and considering that the books of the emerging Christian Scriptures were circulating in manuscript form, the texts of these books were by no means inviolable; to the contrary, they were altered with relative ease and alarming frequency. Most of the changes were accidental, the result of scribal ineptitude, carelessness, or fatigue. Others were intentional and reflect the controversial milieu within which they were produced.²⁰⁵

The Author asserts the corruption of scripture:

*“... It is not only thinkable that scribes would make such changes, it is manifest that they did. Scribes altered their sacred texts to make them “say” what they were already known to “mean.”*²⁰⁶

The Author sums up the implications of the study in the following:²⁰⁷

“We can first consider the broader implications of the study for New Testament textual research. Textual critics have long imposed a set of unnecessary restrictions on the parameters of their discourse, blinders

²⁰⁴ Ibid, p. 264.

²⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 275.

²⁰⁶ Ibid, 276.

²⁰⁷ Ibid, p. 277.

that prevent fruitful dialogue with scholars in other fields and, as a consequence, skew the results of their labors. To engage in a study of the text requires a much greater awareness of the sociohistorical context of scribes than is normally envisaged. It is simply not enough to think in terms of manuscripts as conveyors of data; manuscripts were produced by scribes and scribes were human beings who had anxieties, fears, concerns, desires, hatreds, and ideas in other words, scribes worked in a context, and prior to the invention of moveable type, these contexts had a significant effect on how the texts were produced."

The Author asserts in his conclusions that the findings of his research reinforced the notion that theologically motivated changes of the text are to be anticipated particularly during the early centuries of transmission. Also, the instability of the text in the early centuries is equaled by the instability of the scribes ...²⁰⁸

²⁰⁸ Ibid, p. 277.

Testimony #18: Kirsch - Harlot by the Side of the Road; Forbidden Tales of the Bible (1997).

The Author: **Jonathan Kirsch** is an American attorney, writer, and a columnist for the Los Angeles Times. He serves as adjunct Professor on the Faculty of New York University's Professional Publishing Institute.²⁰⁹

The Book: *Harlot by the Side of the Road; Forbidden Tales of the Bible*, Ballantine Books (1997).

The Author opens his book with the following statement:

*"The stories you are about to read are some of the most violent and sexually explicit in all of Western literature. They are tales of human passion in all of its infinite variety: adultery, seduction, incest, rape, mutilation, assassination, torture, sacrifice, and murder. And yet every one of these stories is drawn directly from the pages of the Holy Bible."*²¹⁰

...

*"The stories that are retold here will come as a surprise to many readers precisely because, over the centuries, they have been suppressed by rabbis, priests, and ministers uncomfortable with the candor of the biblical storytellers about human conduct, sexual or otherwise. At times, the instruments of censorship have been subtle and even devious, and that's why even regular church- and synagogue-goers may not know that these stories, bold and blunt as they are, can be found in the original text of the Bible."*²¹¹

The Author selects the following stories to be included in the book:

- Lot and his daughters

²⁰⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jonathan_Kirsch

²¹⁰ Kirsch (1997) - Harlot by the Side ..., p. 10.

²¹¹ Ibid, p. 12.

- The rape of Dinah
- Tamar and Judah
- Zipporah and Moses
- Jephthah and his daughter
- The traveler and his concubine
- Tamar and Amnon
- The rape of Tamar

Each story is analyzed, not only to be amused by its scandalous nature, but also to expose the immorality of the Bible's authors. Six of the above stories contain explicit acts of rape or incest. The other two, "Zipporah and Moses" and "Jephthah and his daughter" raise moral issues of different nature.

In the story of "Zipporah and Moses", Ch. 8, Zipporah played the role of a heroine and saved her husband, Moses, from an attempt on his life by God! To stop the attack on her Moses, she circumcised her son with a flint stone and smeared her husband's leg with the bloody foreskin. Here is, how the story is told in Ex. 4:24-26:

24. *And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the Lord met him, and sought to kill him.*
25. *Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband art thou to me.*
26. *So he let him go: then she said, A bloody husband thou art, because of the circumcision. (Ex. 4:24-26).*

This story is so weird that it deserved the following comments from the Author:²¹²

"For mystery, mayhem, and sheer baffling weirdness, nothing else in the Bible quite compares with the story of Zipporah and the "Bridegroom of Blood" in Exodus 4:24-26. Like some grotesque insect preserved in

²¹² Ibid, p. 150.

biblical amber, the spare three lines of text in Exodus that describe God's night attack on Moses—and the blood ritual that Zipporah uses to defend her husband and son—suggest that the faith of the ancient Israelites was far stranger and richer than the biblical authors are willing to let on.

The enigmatic text of Exodus 4:24–26 has distressed Bible readers and scholars—and excited their imaginations—for at least three millennia. No other passage in the Bible has been tortured into such odd and even scandalous readings by otherwise pious hands. Yet no other passage has been quite so resistant to the biblical codebreakers...

Does she use the foreskin to smear blood on someone's legs, as the biblical text states, or is the word used euphemistically to refer to someone's genitals, as it is elsewhere in the Bible? And if we are to understand that "legs" actually means "genitals," we must ask: Whose genitals are painted with blood?

And what does Zipporah mean when she utters the mystical phrase: "Surely a bridegroom of blood art thou to me"?"

The story of “Jephthah and his daughter” involved human sacrifice by burning. As the story goes, Jephthah made a vow to God that if He helps him defeat his enemies, he would offer the first thing that comes from the door of his house when he returns home as a sacrifice to God. Here, the last part of the story as it appears in Judges, Ch. 11:

30. *And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands,*
 31. *Then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering.*

...

34. *And Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house, and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances:*

and she was his only child; beside her he had neither son nor daughter.

35. *And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter! thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me: for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back.*

36. *And she said unto him, My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; forasmuch as the Lord hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, even of the children of Ammon.*

37. *And she said unto her father, let this thing be done for me: let me alone two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I and my fellows.*

38. *And he said, Go. And he sent her away for two months: and she went with her companions and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains.*

39. *And it came to pass at the end of two months, that she returned unto her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had vowed: and she knew no man. And it was a custom in Israel, (Judges 11:30-39)*

Here are some of the Author's comments on the above story:

"The oddest assortment of rogues, outlaws, and lowlifes in all of the Bible are found in the Book of Judges: seducers and harlots, assassins and mercenaries, rapists and torturers. Yet we also find heroes and heroines, martyrs and saviors, and among them is a beguiling young woman whose strange life—and even stranger death—are preserved in a few intriguing lines of text. The Bible asks us to regard Jephthah's daughter as an accidental but willing victim of human sacrifice, and yet we might wonder whether Jephthah's daughter and her companions did something

so shocking to the biblical authors that they dressed up her death in the trappings of sacrifice but dared not speak her name at all.”²¹³

The above story contains some horrific undeclared facts about the Israelite people:

- Jephthah knew exactly what he was doing. He offered his daughter as a sacrifice for nobody else was in his home.
- Jephthah’s god was silent in the story. He accepted the sacrifice.
- The prevalence of pagan practices, such as human sacrifice, among the Israelites.

In the last chapter of the book, the Author raises important questions about the purpose of the Bible and the intentions of those who wrote it. In the Bible we read accounts that depict God a mischievous and murderous deity. It portrays His prophets (who are supposed to be the Select and the best in character) and their immediate family members as liars, cheaters, adulterers, rapists, incesters, murderers, etc.:

“At first blush, of course, what’s “hot” about the forbidden stories of the Bible are the shocks and surprises that await the reader who expects to find only Sunday school stuff—the frank and mostly nonjudgmental accounts of seduction, exhibitionism, voyeurism, adultery, incest, rape, and murder. Sometimes it is hard to make out the moral example that the biblical authors intend us to see in these tales of human passion. And that is why the stories we have explored here have been censored, banned, mistranslated, or simply ignored by preachers and teachers who found them too hot to handle.

But these stories are “hot” in quite another sense. As we have seen, the Bible is littered with the artifacts and relics of ancient beliefs and

²¹³ Ibid, p. 191.

practices that come as a surprise to anyone who has been taught to regard the Bible as a single-minded manifesto of ethical monotheism. The depiction of God as a mischievous and sometimes even murderous deity is shocking to anyone who envisions the Almighty as a heavenly father and “King of the Universe,” benign and compassionate, slow to anger and quick to forgive. By the time we finish reading and pondering these troubling stories, we are left with the unsettling realization that something very odd was going on in ancient Israel before the priests and scribes came along and cleaned up the biblical text—and we have only a faint if provocative notion of what it was.

So, the theological hot spots in the Bible turn out to be even more unsettling than the incidents of human misconduct. While it may seem scandalous that in both Jewish and Christian tradition David is regarded as “a man after God’s heart,” the very model of a just and righteous king, and the progenitor of the Messiah, it is even harder to explain away the fact that his son and successor, the wise King Solomon, sacrifices to the Canaanite goddess called Ashtoreth, among other pagan deities, and yet is never punished for his “abominations.” David’s sins are purely human failings, but Solomon’s act of apostasy defies what we are taught to regard as the essential teaching of the Bible and the three religions that regard the Bible as Holy Writ: “Thou shalt have no other gods before Me” is, quite literally, written in stone by the finger of the Almighty (Deut. 5:7)!

So, we might conclude from an open-eyed reading of the forbidden texts of the Bible that the fundamental truth is that there is no fundamental truth. Instead, we are invited to join the rest of humanity in a restless, ceaseless search to discern some moral order in a chaotic universe. We are challenged by the Bible itself to figure out who God is and what God wants—and that is the most disturbing revelation of all. The plain fact is that the Bible offers many visions of God, many explanations of God’s will, many prophecies of humankind’s destiny, and the real challenge is to discern the ones that make sense and ring true, the

ones that hold out the promise of peace in a troubled and dangerous world.”²¹⁴

The Author includes in the book an Appendix that carries the title: “Who Really Wrote the Bible?” In answering his own question, he writes:

“Today, the Bible is regarded by most scholars and critics as a patchwork of legend, lore, and law that was created over a thousand years or so in distant antiquity by countless unknown chroniclers and lawgivers and storytellers, collected and compiled and corrected by generation after generation of editors (or “redactors”), and canonized by the ancient rabbis only toward the end of the biblical era. Thus, even if we regard what we find in the Bible as divinely inspired, the words themselves were spoken aloud by human voices and set down in writing by human hands.”²¹⁵

So, perhaps most of the scandalous stories we read in the Bible are folklore and legends. They never happened the way they were recorded in the Bible.

The story of Lot committing incest with his two daughters is most likely an *etiological myth*: that is, it explains the origins of something. Its purpose is to shame the Moabites and Ammonites (the hostile neighbors of the Israelites) by recounting their origins as incestuous.²¹⁶

The three versions of the story about a man presenting his wife as his sister to protect himself (Two stories involving Abraham and Sarah, and one involving Isaac and Rebekah) carry all the features

²¹⁴ Ibid, pp. 285-286.

²¹⁵ Ibid, p. 296.

²¹⁶ See for example: <https://www.bibleodyssey.org/en/places/related-articles/lot-and-his-daughters>

of a folklore. It is the same story recounted many times with small variations.²¹⁷

Before we leave, there is one comment concerning the following statement that the Author wrote in the book:

“.. the Hebrew Bible, a book that is regarded as sacred by Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.”²¹⁸

The last part of the above statement is not true because in Islam the existing Bible is considered a corrupted scripture that was authored by humans and does not contain authentic revelation from God. In the Qur'an, we find the following verse that condemns the Israelites who forged a book and claimed that it was from God:

Then woe to those who write the Book with their own hands and then say, "This is from Allah," to purchase with it a little price! Woe to them for what their hands have written and woe to them for that they earn thereby. (Al-Baqara, 79).

²¹⁷ Dundes (1999) - *Holy Writ ...*, pp. 38-39.

²¹⁸ Kirsch (1997) - *Harlot by the Side ...*, p. 21.

Testimony #19: Dundes - Holy Writ as Oral Lit; The Bible as Folklore (1999).

The Author: **Alan Dundes** (1934-2004). An American anthropologist and folklorist. He received his Ph.D. in Folklore from Indiana University in 1962 and in 1963 he joined the teaching staff at the University of California, Berkley. He wrote over 250 journal articles and 12 books and co-wrote more than 20 other books.²¹⁹

The Book: *Holy Writ as Oral Lit; The Bible as Folklore*, Rowman, Littlefield Pub., Inc. (1999).

The Author starts by identifying and defining “Folklore.”

*“... Folklore is always in flux, always changing. Because of the factors of multiple existence and variation, no two versions of an item of folklore will be identical. Sometimes the variation will be slight; in other instances, it may be considerable.”*²²⁰

Folklore can be of two types:²²¹

1. Free-phrase genres (such as legends and jokes in which the plot is traditional, but the wording may vary).
2. Fixed-phrase genres (such as folk similes or tongue twisters in which both the content and the wording are traditional).

Multiple existence and variation are characteristic of all genres of folklore: proverbs, jokes, legends, and so on. It is distinguishable from so-called high or elite culture and from popular culture.

²¹⁹

https://books.google.com.sa/books/about/Holy_Writ_as_Oral_Lit.html?id=RfDTguoQVxgC&redir_esc=y

²²⁰ Dundes (1999) - Holy Writ ..., p. 2.

²²¹ Ibid, p. 3.

Almost all high and popular culture exist in fixed, unchanging form either because a novel or short story is locked into print or a television program or motion picture is locked into videotape or film.

Folklore may exist in oral or written forms. But it is always characterized by its multiple existence and variation. The variations in the folklore may be in one word, a phrase, a name, a date, or in sequence.

The Author asserts that there are also a number of myths in Genesis: the creation of humankind and the flood myths, to mention just two. A myth is defined as a “sacred narrative explaining how the world and mankind came to be in their present form”. So, there are myths in the Bible; as well as many other folklore genres such as folktales, legends, proverbs, and curses.²²²

The Author then reports many cases of folkloristic texts in the Bible. We look here at some of it.

1- The texts in Matthew 10:29-31 and Luke 12:6-7:

Are there not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows. (Matthew 10:29-31).

Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows. (Luke 12:6-7).

²²² Ibid, p. 13.

By comparing the two texts, we can clearly see two versions of the same incident with some variation. In short, we have an example of folklore!²²³

2- The different accounts of the trees in the Garden of Eden with variations that Adam was allowed to eat from every tree, was forbidden to eat from 2 trees, and was forbidden to eat from one tree:²²⁴

*And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and **every tree**, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat (Gen. 1:29).*

*And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the **tree of life** also in the midst of the garden and the **tree of knowledge** of good and evil (Gen. 2:9).*

*And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: **But of the tree of the knowledge** of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die (Gen. 2:16–17).*

3- The three versions of the story of a man presenting his wife as his sister to protect himself from harm. The first account involved Abraham, Sarah and Pharaoh (Gen. 12:11-13, 15-19.) The second account involved Abraham, Sarah and Abimelech (Gen. 20:2-3, 9, 11, 14.). And the third account involved Isaac, Rebekah and Abimelech (Gen. 26:6-11.)

²²³ Ibid, p. 21.

²²⁴ Ibid, pp. 24-25.

They are three versions of the same story with nearly identical plot. And the response of the duped person in the different accounts is to say the same phrases (almost):

What is this that thou has done unto me? (Gen. 12:18)

What has thou done unto us? (Gen. 20:9)

What is this thou hast done unto us? (Gen. 26:10)

It is the opinion of the Author that the above is not a coincidence; It is folklore!²²⁵

4- Another name variation concerns the name of King David's second son. While David was living in Hebron, he had six sons by six different wives. In two versions of a description to his family, two different names were given to his second son:²²⁶

And unto David were sons born in Hebron . . . and his second, Chileab, of Abigail, the wife of Nabal the Carmelite (2 Sam. 3:2, 3).

Now these were the sons of David, which were born unto him in Hebron . . . the second Daniel, of Abigail the Carmelitess. (1 Chron. 3:1).

5- The Ten Commandments.²²⁷ There are several versions of the Ten Commandments. One of them is in Ex. 20:

1. *And God spake all these words, saying,*

²²⁵ Ibid, pp. 38-39.

²²⁶ Ibid, p. 44.

²²⁷ Ibid, pp. 96-102.

2. *I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.*
3. *Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*
4. *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.*
5. *Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;*
6. *And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.*
7. *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.*
8. *Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.*
9. *Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:*
10. *But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:*
11. *For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.*
12. *Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*
13. *Thou shalt not kill.*
14. *Thou shalt not commit adultery.*
15. *Thou shalt not steal.*
16. *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.*
17. *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's. (Ex. 20:1-17).*

Another complete version is in Deut. 5:

6. *I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.*
7. *Thou shalt have none other gods before me.*
8. *Thou shalt not make thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters beneath the earth:*
9. *Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me,*
10. *And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.*
11. *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.*
12. *Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee.*
- ...
16. *Honour thy father and thy mother, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*
17. *Thou shalt not kill.*
18. *Neither shalt thou commit adultery.*
19. *Neither shalt thou steal.*
20. *Neither shalt thou bear false witness against thy neighbour.*
21. *Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour's house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or any thing that is thy neighbour's.* (Deut. 5:6-12,16-21).

The two versions are quite similar to each other with one exception: in the Exodus version, coveting thy neighbor's house comes before coveting thy neighbor's wife, whereas the order is reversed in the Deuteronomy version (Ex. 20:17; Deut. 5:21).

The other interesting fact is that there are twelve commandments, not ten. From the Exodus version, we can identify the following twelve commandments;

1. I am the Lord thy God.
2. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
3. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.
4. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them.
5. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.
6. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.
7. Honor thy father and thy mother.
8. Thou shalt not kill.
9. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
10. Thou shalt not steal.
11. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
12. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house.

The issue of who wrote down the Ten Commandments is a source of variation in the different versions of the story. Most of the accounts indicate that God Himself wrote these commandments on the stone tablets. There are two verses, however, Ex. 24:4 and Ex. 34:27-28, that indicate that Moses did the writing:

4. And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. (Ex. 24:4).

27. And the Lord said unto Moses, write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel.

28. And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments. (Ex. 34:27-28).

The Author summarizes the main conclusions of the study in the following:²²⁸

1. Folklore is characterized by multiple existence and variation.
2. The Bible is permeated by multiple existence and variation.
3. The Bible is folklore!

²²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 111.

Testimony #20: Thompson - The Mythic Past (1999).

The Author: **Thomas L. Thompson** (1939-) is a biblical scholar and theologian. He was professor of theology at the University of Copenhagen from 1993 to 2009.²²⁹

The Book: *The Mythic Past. Biblical Archaeology and the Myth of Israel*, Basic Books (1999).

The book is composed of 15 chapters distributed over three parts as follows:

- Part 1: How Stories Talk about the Past.
 - Ch. 1 - History and origin: the changing past.
 - Ch. 2 - Confusing stories with historical evidence.
 - Ch. 3 - How the Bible talks about the past.
 - Ch. 4 - Myths of origins.
- Part 2: How Historians Create A Past.
 - Ch. 5 - Beginnings
 - Ch. 6 - A Mediterranean economy
 - Ch. 7 - Palestine's many people
 - Ch. 8 - Under the shadow of empire
 - Ch. 9 - Historian create history
- Part 3: The Bible's Place in History.
 - Ch. 10 - The Bible's social and historical worlds
 - Ch. 11 - The Bible's literary world
 - Ch. 12 - The Bible's theological world I: how God began
 - Ch. 13 - The Bible's theological world II: the myths of the son of God

²²⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_L._Thompson

- Ch. 14 - The Bible's theological world III: Israel as God's son

The book proves that what is narrated in the Bible is only myth. The objectives of the three parts of the book are summarized by the Author in the following:²³⁰

"The present book is an attempt to look at the Bible's view of the past on its own terms. Throughout Part One, I will try to explain how it is that the Bible has been misunderstood as history. Traditions such as the Bible's, which provided ancient society with a common past, are very different from the critical histories that play a central role in contemporary intellectual life. ..."

"In Part Two I wish to present a clear and accurate idea of the kind of historical knowledge we have about ancient Palestine. I compare this perspective with the very different view of the Bible and of ancient Israel that biblical archaeologists have given us. In drawing this contrast, I will give a lot of space to how the writers of the Bible understood the divine, and I will compare this with the ancient West Semitic deity, ..."

"Part Three takes up an issue that any critical understanding of the Bible has to address: the historical contexts in which the text was written and in which the tradition was formed. These are the contexts - intellectual, literary and social - which have given the Bible its particular structure and language. ..."

The Author starts by giving a bleak picture of the status of the field of historical studies of the Bible for its lack of solid scientific methods:

"The lack of a reliable historical context for the Bible has been a great hindrance to modern biblical studies. The lack of sound historical

²³⁰ Thompson (1999) - The Mythic Past, pp. 5-6.

*methods, however, has condemned to failure the search for the Bible's place in history from the very start. Ancient texts are very hard to read unless we know something about the world they are written in and for. A century ago, Bible scholars made up their own world, their own context for their texts. They drew it from the Bible itself, and it amounted to little more than a paraphrase of selected biblical accounts. Because no other ancient world of Palestine was known, it seemed better to present this traditional world as history than to have no history at all. However, the historical context that emerged was an uncritical assumption that guaranteed only that the Bible was misread."*²³¹

Theological prejudice that insists on adopting 'the Bible's view of the past' has hindered the progress in biblical scholarship:

*"In the past century, ancient Near Eastern studies and the growing dominance of archaeology in writing the history of Palestine has transformed ancient history. The mainstream of biblical scholarship has resisted change vigorously, preferring whenever possible to defend a paraphrase of the biblical tale as 'the Bible's view of the past'. Many in the field of biblical archaeology have gone so far as to argue that this traditional history should be maintained as valid except where it has been proven to be historically impossible. Only in very recent years has archaeology begun to develop a history of Palestine independent of such theological prejudice."*²³²

The dependence on the Bible itself as a source of history resulted in the failure of separating myth from history:

"The Bible's own story of the past, centred on the rise and fall of old Israel, still dominates historical reconstructions within biblical studies, yet, the art and delight of these stories is little appreciated. They are seen only in their transformations as accounts of events: they have become history. The study of all the texts from the ancient Near East and of all

²³¹ Ibid, p. 4.

²³² Ibid, p. 4.

the excavations in Israel and Palestine has been infected by a rather singular aspiration of biblical scholarship: to understand the Bible as an account of the historical past. The stories that we read from Genesis to the end of II Kings have come to serve as an historical context for all the rest of the Bible's literature, including its poetry and its philosophical writings.

*Such thinking, posing as an historical and critical scholarly discipline, has been a great embarrassment to modern research. Rather than being historical, it broke the first rule of history by failing to distinguish it from myth. Rather than being critical, it used a logic entirely circular. Rather than being a self-correcting, self-critical science, it took for granted its own assumptions and contented itself merely to 'correcting' the Bible where plausibility required it. The miracles, it seems, had to go, but the rest could remain as unchanged as possible. While such a need to read our sacred texts as history begs explanation, biblical archaeology has resolutely failed to provide the Bible with an historical context in which it might reasonably be understood."*²³³

The presence of evidence from extra-biblical texts does not necessarily confirm the historicity of the Bible's stories. On the contrary, it confirms the Bible's own presentation of them as active tales of the past:

*"... While it is a hard-won principle of biblical archaeology that the historicity of ancient biblical narratives about old Israel cannot be affirmed unless we have extra-biblical evidence, it is just as important to be aware that even when we do have such extra-biblical confirmation, it is more likely to confirm the Bible's literary and metaphorical tropes than to establish it as historical record-keeping."*²³⁴

²³³ Ibid, pp. 4-5.

²³⁴ Ibid, pp. 14-15.

“... The evidence suggests that the Bible, like Shakespeare, often invokes fictional kings in confecting its stories. This is the very nature of literature.”²³⁵

The twentieth century has seen critical advances eroded by the growth in an understanding of the Bible that might best be described as a form of 'naïve realism'. This results in confusing naïve realism with historical method:

“The Bible doesn’t deal with what happened in the past. It deals with what was thought, written and transmitted within an interacting intellectual tradition.”²³⁶

“Which of the Bible’s many stories of origin are to be read as if they were narratives about events of the past, and which are to be discarded as mere story? Each choice made involved the elimination of alternative stories. Each affirmation of the historicity or historical rootedness of one tradition bore with its implicit denials of the historicity of an alternative tradition. Each positivistic assertion that this or that aspect of tradition was ‘rooted in history’ bore with it a covert denial of other traditions.”²³⁷

The Author is not impressed by authors of the biblical texts that describe the myths of origin:

“The authors of biblical texts knew precious little about the immediate past and next to nothing about the distant past. They had neither magic glasses nor any special knowledge. But they were good poets and skillful storytellers. Their theology was adventurous and at times courageous, though their philosophy was unexceptional. With their own human limitations, their stories take us, not back to the beginning of time, but to an imaginary time, a mythical time, before the world was the way it is. Such a time is enclosed within the transcendent space of a

²³⁵ Ibid, p. 15.

²³⁶ Ibid, p. 34.

²³⁷ Ibid, p. 35.

Narnia-like, legendary land of Qedem in which our world comes into contact with the transcendent. It is here that our world was born in story, and from Qedem that the narrative begins.”²³⁸

It wasn't the intention of authors of the Bible for it to be a book of history. This means the collapse of the paradigm: “the Bible as history”:

“One of the things the Bible almost never is, however, is intentionally historical: that is an interest of ours that it rarely shares. Here and there, the Bible uses data gleaned from ancient texts or records. It often refers to great figures and events of the past . . . at least as they are known to popular tradition. But it cites such ‘historical facts’ only where they may serve as grist for one of its various literary mills. The Bible knows nothing or nearly nothing of most of the great, transforming events of Palestine’s history. Of historical causes, it knows only one: Palestine’s ancient deity Yahweh. It knows nearly nothing of the great droughts that changed the course of Palestine’s world for centuries, and it is equally ignorant of the region’s great historical battles at Megiddo, Kadesh and Lachish. The Bible tells us nothing directly of four hundred years of Egyptian presence. Nor can it take on the role of teaching us anything about the wasteful competition for the Jezreel in the early Iron Age, or about the forced sedentarization of nomads along Palestine’s southern flank.

The reason for this is simple. The Bible’s language is not an historical language. It is a language of high literature, of story, of sermon and of song. It is a tool of philosophy and moral instruction. To argue that the Bible has it wrong is like alleging that Herman Melville has got his whale wrong! Literarily, one might quibble about whether Jonah has it right with his big fish, but not because the story could or could not have happened. On the story’s own terms, the rescue of Jonah is but a journeyman’s device as far as plot resolutions go. But no false note is

²³⁸ Ibid, p. 83.

*sounded in Jonah's fig tree, in Yahweh's speech from the whirlwind in the Book of Job, or in Isaiah 40's song of comfort."*²³⁹

We fast forward to the third part of the book to examine the theology of the Bible. The Author believes that the Bible is a collection of stories, myths and traditions; it can't be the source of serious theology:

*"Theologians in the past have often arrogantly referred to stories as 'mere stories'. To speak of the Bible's stories was seen to implicate the Bible in lies. Nevertheless, I want to emphasize that we have failed to realize the implications that in Genesis we have only stories. They are complicated stories, rich stories, profound and moving stories, but, none the less, stories alone. I do not begin to imply by this that some of the stories in Genesis are not religious or pious stories. They are - some of them. What I do mean to say is that even these pious and religious stories have their first purpose in fiction."*²⁴⁰

*"The Bible in its essence is a collection of traditions past. They are traditions lost, destroyed, betrayed and shattered, but nevertheless remnants of an Israel of which the bearers understood themselves as the remnant saved. Such texts are not reflections of any religion that once existed. They are rather interpretations of known tradition presented as that of the lost past. Such reinterpreting reflection marks them as critical texts and as commentaries. Their emphasis on listening and reading, on preserving, and on distinguishing thought and understanding, hardly implies an affirmation or commitment to cult and religion."*²⁴¹

Even if the Bible contains some theology, this theology is obsolete; it is not suitable for modern times:

²³⁹ Ibid, p. 99.

²⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 301.

²⁴¹ Ibid, p. 387.

"Yet, the Bible's theology - the critical and historical theology that belongs to the text - is a very old theology. It is past and ultimately unrecoverable."

*"... The world-view of the Old Testament belongs to a different age from ours. We are not, cannot be and should hardly look to become - even in imagination - Hellenistic Jews, that the text might speak to us. The text doesn't speak to us, nor was it addressed to us. To pretend that it does and was, is among theology's least critical and most self-serving lies. This book, the Bible, is written in a dead language, which had its competence and its signification within a culture that is long since forgotten. It was never written for us and can hold false - when not falsified - messages for us. A contemporary theology that would see itself based on the themes, metaphors and motifs of Old Testament stories and poems is a highly artificial, and one must also say a highly arbitrary, exercise. Such exercises are best pursued for antiquarian and nostalgic reasons. For such laudable reasons, for example, our bishops carry shepherds' staffs, and we eat lamb at Easter! At their worst, however, such exercises easily become remarkably manipulative efforts to sell a modern reading as the truth of scripture."*²⁴²

If the Bible is an obsolete document that can't be relied upon as a source of history or theology, why there is still great interest in it? The Author believes the reason is because the Europeans identify themselves with Christianity and with the Bible as the Scripture of Christianity:²⁴³

"Europe's search for its sources through a rediscovery of its classical and biblical roots created a need for the history it explored to be in fact the real past: a past that gave legitimacy to revolutionary choices. It is in such

²⁴² Ibid, pp. 387-388.

²⁴³ Ibid, p. 376

a dislocated context of faith that history has been believed rather than known."

"Europe and the West's historical claims to the intellectual and spiritual property of ancient Syria and Palestine begin already in fourth-century Western Christianity's rediscovery of its religious roots in the 'Holy Land'."

*"European identification with the Bible also finds its origins in the reforming traditions of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. The first was crowned by the Protestant revolt which asserted for the Bible a critical place both in the theological world of the university and in the moral and spiritual life of everyman. The latter was marked by the paradigm of history at the centre of a modern concept of reality."*²⁴⁴

²⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 376.

Testimony #21: Friedman - Who Wrote the Bible? (2011).

The Author: **Richard Elliott Friedman** (1946-) is biblical scholar and the Ann and Jay Davis Professor of Jewish Studies at the University of Georgia. Rochester, New York.²⁴⁵

The Book: *Who Wrote the Bible*, 2e, 2011.

The Author adopts a novel approach to answer the question that the scholars has been trying to answer for the last one thousand year. He takes the reader into a time-travel journey to investigate the settings under which the documents of the Bible were written. From there, the search commences for evidences and clues.

The investigation focuses on books of the Pentateuch and the Early Prophets (Joshua, Judges, Samuels, Kings) and Chronicles. It is based on the hypothesis that the Pentateuch was composed of four different documents that were written by different authors. On this, Friedman writes:

"There was evidence that the Five Books of Moses had been composed by combining four different documents into one continuous history. For working purposes, the four documents were identified by alphabetic symbols. The document that was associated with the divine name Yahweh/Jehovah was called J. The document that was identified as referring to the deity as God (in Hebrew, Elohim) was called E. The third document, by far the largest, included most of the legal sections and concentrated a great deal on matters having to do with priests, and so it was called P. And the source that found only in the book of Deuteronomy was called D. The question was now how to uncover the history of these

²⁴⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Elliott_Friedman

*four documents - not only who wrote them, but why four different versions of the story was written, what their relationship to each other was, whether any of the authors were aware of the existence of the others' texts, when in history each was produced, how they were preserved and combined, and a host of other questions."*²⁴⁶

Thus, the problem at hand is broken into four tasks; each task's aim is to answer who wrote one of the four source documents (J, E, P & D).

One of the features that distinguishes J from E is the name of God:

"... I have said that the name of God was a key distinction between J and E. Now let me be more specific. In J, the deity is called Yahweh from beginning to end. The J writer never refers to him as Elohim in narration. In E, the deity is called Elohim until the arrival of Moses. From the first time that Moses meets God, this changes. In the famous E story of the day that Moses meets God—the story of the burning bush—Moses does not know God's name, and so he asks.

And Moses said to God [Elohim], "Here I am coming to the children of Israel, and I say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they will say to me, 'What is his name?' What shall I say to them?"

The deity first gives the famous response "I am what I am." (The Hebrew root of these words is the same as the root of the name Yahweh.) And then he answers:

Thus, shall you say to the children of Israel; "Yahweh, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you." This is my name forever: By this I shall be remembered from generation to generation.

²⁴⁶ Friedman (2011) - *Who Wrote the Bible*, p. 31.

In E, Yahweh reveals his name for the first time to Moses. Prior to this scene in Exodus, he is called El or Elohim.”²⁴⁷

After further analysis, Friedman becomes more specific as to who wrote the J and E documents. Evidence points that the author of J came from Judah and the author of E came from Israel. The author of E was certainly a male who lived in the time frame between 848 and 722 B.C. The author of J, on the other hand, might be a woman who lived in the time frame between 922 to 722 B.C.²⁴⁸ But, what are the names of these authors? Unfortunately, there aren’t enough clues to tell us who exactly wrote the J and E document. But it was definitely not Moses.

The investigation moved next to Deuteronomy. Evidence points out that it was not written by Moses:

“In Germany in 1805, W. M. L. De Wette investigated the origin of Deuteronomy. He argued that Deuteronomy was the book that Hilkiah handed over to King Josiah. But De Wette denied that the book was by Moses. He said that Deuteronomy was not an old, Mosaic book that had been lost for a long time and then found by the priest Hilkiah. Rather, De Wette said, Deuteronomy was written not long before it was “found” in the Temple, and the “finding” was just a charade. The book was written to provide grounds for Josiah’s religious reform.”²⁴⁹

After a lengthy analysis and investigation, Friedman concludes that the author of D is the prophet Jeremiah:

“It is time to name that person. In the first place, we know of a man who was alive and writing in precisely those years: the prophet Jeremiah. He was in the right places at the right times. He was a priest, of the priests of Shiloh-Anathoth. He was in Jerusalem during the reign of

²⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 112.

²⁴⁸ Ibid, pp. 120-121.

²⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 144.

Josiah, when Dtr¹ was produced. He was in Egypt after the destruction and exile, when Dtr² was produced. His book is filled with the language of the Deuteronomistic history, the same favorite terms and phrases, the same metaphors, the same point of view on practically every important point. He was quite possibly the son of the man who unveiled the law code of Deuteronomy. He favored Josiah but not his successors on the throne.

*The book of Jeremiah, further, is filled throughout with the language of both Dtr¹ and Dtr². How could phrases that are typical to Dtr¹ appear in the book of Jeremiah, regularly intertwined with phrases that are otherwise unique to Dtr², unless all three came from the same source?"*²⁵⁰

As to the author of P, he was a male from Judah, almost certainly from Jerusalem. He was one of the Aaronid priesthood or their spokesman:

*"The identification of the author of P, like those of the authors of J and E, is without a name. But, as with J and E, we have information that is probably more important. Through clues from language, architecture, archeology, other literature, and, as usual, the Bible itself, we have traced the person who produced P to a particular group in a particular place at a particular time. The author's stories and much of his law reflect the concerns of that group in the political, religious, and social issues of that time."*²⁵¹

And finally, it was **Ezra** who emerges as the most likely person who combined the different documents and produced the Five Books of the Pentateuch:

"THE combination of P with J, E, and D was even more extraordinary than the combination of J and E with each other had been centuries earlier. P was polemic—it was an answer-torah to J and E. JE denigrated Aaron. P denigrated Moses. JE assumed that any Levite could

²⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 210.

²⁵¹ Ibid, p. 304.

be a priest. P said that only men who were descendants of Aaron could be priests. JE said that there were angels, that animals occasionally could talk, and that God could be found standing on a rock or walking through the garden of Eden. P would have none of that.

D, meanwhile, came from a circle of people who were as hostile to P as the P-circle were to JE. These two priestly groups had struggled, over centuries, for priestly prerogatives, authority, income, and legitimacy. And now someone was putting all of these works together.

Someone was combining JE with the work that was written as an alternative to, it. And this person was not merely combining them side by side, as parallel stories. He or she was cutting and intersecting them intricately. And at the end of this combined, interwoven collection of the laws and stories of J, E, and P, this person set Deuteronomy, the farewell speech of Moses, as a conclusion. Someone was merging the four different, often opposing sources so artfully that it would take millennia to figure it out.

This was the person who created the Torah, the Five Books of Moses that we have read for over two thousand years. Who was this person? Why did he or she do it? This was the first question of this book: if Moses did not produce these books, who did?

*I think that it was Ezra.*²⁵²

²⁵² Ibid, pp. 308-309.

Testimony #22: Ehrman - FORGED; Writing in the Name of God-Why the Bible's Authors are not Who We Think They Are (2011).

The Author: **Bart D. Ehrman** (1955-) is an American New Testament scholar focusing on textual criticism of the New Testament, the historical Jesus, the origins and development of early Christianity.²⁵³

The Book: *Forged. Writing in the Name of God. Why the Bible's Authors Are Not Who We Think They Are*, HarperCollins, 2011.

The book is composed of an “Introduction” and 8 chapters:

1. A World of Deceptions and Forgeries.
2. Forgeries in the Name of Peter.
3. Forgeries in the Name of Paul.
4. Alternatives to Lies and Deceptions.
5. Forgeries in Conflicts with Jews and Pagans.
6. Forgeries in Conflicts with False Teachers.
7. False Attributions, Fabrications, and Falsifications:
Phenomena Related to Forgery.
8. Forgeries, Lies, Deceptions, and the Writings of the New Testament.

The Author starts by introducing some definitions to the different types of writings:²⁵⁴

- Orthonymous writing: is one that really is written by the person who claims to be writing it.

²⁵³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bart_D._Ehrman

²⁵⁴ Ehrman (2011) - FORGED; Writing in the Name of God ..., pp. 28-29.

- Homonymous (literally, “same named”) writing: is one that is written by someone who happens to have the same name as someone else.
- Anonymous (literally, “having no name”) writing: these are books whose authors never identify themselves.
- Pseudonymous (literally, “falsely named”) writing: refers to any book that appears under the name of someone other than the author.
- Pseudepigraphal writing: is one that is claimed to be written by a famous, well-known, or authoritative person who did not in fact write it. It is of two types: false ascription, or forgery.

The Author further clarifies the term “forgery” in the following:²⁵⁵

“My use of the term “forgery,” however, does not say anything about the legal status of the document in question or the criminal activity of the author. It is a technical term referring to one kind of pseudepigraphal writing, one in which an author knowingly claims to be someone else.”

We move to examine the Author’s opinion regarding the different books of the New Testament. On the Gospel of Peter, after detailed analysis, he writes:

*“... Whether or not this is Serapion’s Gospel, it is certainly a Gospel of Peter. It claims its authority in the name of Jesus’s closest disciple, in part, no doubt, to make its incredible and anti-Jewish narratives seem completely credible. But Peter didn’t write it. This is a **forgery** in the name of Peter. And it’s not the only one.”²⁵⁶*

On the Epistle of Peter:

“... Here we have a view of Peter and Paul very much at odds with what we find in some of the writings of the New Testament. In the history

²⁵⁵ Ibid, p. 31.

²⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 71.

of the early church found in the book of Acts, for example, Peter and Paul see eye to eye, they agree on every major point, they stand arm in arm in the mission to spread the gospel, and most important, they wholeheartedly concur that Gentiles do not need to be Jews to be followers of Jesus (see Acts 10–11; 15). This is not the case, however, for the author of the Epistle of Peter. Here there is a clear split between Peter, Jesus's closest disciple, and Paul, an interloper who has misinterpreted Peter. Paul has misrepresented the gospel.

This, then, is an author who saw Paul as the enemy and his “lawless and absurd” doctrine as heresy. For this author, Paul not only disagreed with Peter; he was wrong. And on what authority does the author claim this? On the authority of Peter himself. The author forged the letter in Peter’s name in order to make his point.”²⁵⁷

On the Apocalypse of Peter:

“... In order to get his point across, the author writes in the first person—not in his own name, but in the name of the chief disciple. Here again we have a forgery in the name of Peter.”²⁵⁸

On 1 Peter and 2 Peter:

“... As it turns out, two books bear Peter’s name there as well, the letters of 1 Peter and 2 Peter. Both claim to be written by Peter, but there are solid reasons for thinking that Peter did not write either one.”²⁵⁹

On the role of Marcion:

“You might think that someone of Paul’s stature would have been a unifying influence on the early church. As it turns out, nothing could be farther from the truth. At about the time the presbyter of Asia Minor was propounding stories about Paul that led to splits over the role of women

²⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 74.

²⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 76-77.

²⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 77.

in the church, an even bigger menace to the church's unity was coming from a completely different direction. It involved the teachings of one of Paul's greatest early admirers, the second-century teacher and theologian Marcion.

*It is unfortunate that we no longer have any of Marcion's own writings. They were deemed heretical ("false teachings") and destroyed. What we do have are the writings of his opponents, including especially the already-mentioned Tertullian, who wrote a five-volume refutation of Marcion's teachings. We still have this work, and it is a gold mine of information about one of the most divisive persons in the history of the early church."*²⁶⁰

On 3 Corinthians:

*.. This somewhat technical understanding of the term "flesh" came to be lost in later orthodox Christianity, when theologians began thinking that flesh and body were the same thing. And that has happened here in 3 Corinthians. Unlike Paul, this author emphasizes the importance of flesh as a creation of God that will be raised. In other words, this is an instance in which a **forger** claiming to be Paul represents a point of view that is contrary to Paul's, even though he is trying to correct, in Paul's name, teachings he thinks are false."*²⁶¹

The Pastoral Letters (1 Timothy, 2 Timothy & Titus) were written by the same person, and this person was not Paul.²⁶²

On 2 Thessalonians:

*"Paul probably **did not write** 2 Thessalonians..."*²⁶³

²⁶⁰ Ibid, pp. 96-97.

²⁶¹ Ibid, p. 103.

²⁶² Ibid, p. 110.

²⁶³ Ibid, p. 122.

On Ephesians:

*"In point after point, when you look carefully at Ephesians, it stands at odds with Paul's own work. This book was apparently written by a later Christian in one of Paul's churches who wanted to deal with a big issue of his own day: the relation of Jews and Gentiles in the church. He did so by claiming to be Paul, knowing full well that he wasn't Paul. He accomplished his goal, that is, by producing a forgery."*²⁶⁴

On Colossians:

*"What we have here, then, is another instance in which a later follower of Paul was concerned to address a situation in his own day and did so by assuming the mantle and taking the name of Paul, forging a letter in his name."*²⁶⁵

Can the Bible Contain Lies? Answering this question, Ehrman writes:

*"Whereas there are a couple of forgeries in the Old Testament, there are numerous instances in the New Testament... It is a striking phenomenon that even though scholars far and wide agree that these books were not actually written by their alleged authors, many scholars are reluctant to call the books what they are: literary forgeries meant to deceive their readers. Sometimes I think it is a bit strange that when some scholars refer to books with false authorial claims outside the New Testament, they have no qualms calling them "forgeries," but when they refer to such books within the New Testament, they call them "pseudepigrapha."*²⁶⁶

Commenting on (Matt. 10:34):

"In the New Testament, Jesus is reputed to have said, "I did not come to bring peace on earth, but a sword" (Matt. 10:34). Truer words were

²⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 127.

²⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 129.

²⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 134.

never spoken. Many Christians in the modern age think of their religion as peace loving, as well it often has been and should be. But anyone with any grasp of history at all knows also just how violent Christians have been over the ages, sponsoring oppression, injustice, wars, crusades, pogroms, inquisitions, holocausts—all in the name of the faith...

Some early Christians realized that the religion would be based on conflict. The author of the New Testament book of Ephesians, allegedly Paul, tells his readers to “put on the full armor of God” (Eph. 6:10–20) ...

In all these battles, the “full armor of God” included weapons of deceit. Forgery was used by one Christian author or another in order to fend off the attacks of Jews and pagans and to assault the views of other Christians who had alternative, aberrant understandings of the faith.”²⁶⁷

On the Book of Jude:

*“But it is almost certain that the historical Jude **did not write** this book. Its author is living during a later period in the history of the church, when the churches are already well established, and when false teachers have infiltrated them and need to be rooted out. In fact, the author speaks of “remembering the predictions of the apostles” (v. 17) as if they, the apostles, lived a long time before. In contrast to them, he is living in “the last days” that they predicted (v. 18). This is someone living after the apostolic age.*

*There is another reason for being relatively certain that Jude **did not write** the book. Like the lower-class Galilean peasant Peter, the lower-class Galilean peasant Jude could almost certainly not write. Let alone write in Greek. Let alone compose a rhetorically effective letter evidencing detailed knowledge of ancient Jewish texts in Greek. This is an author*

²⁶⁷ Ibid, pp. 160-162.

claiming to be Jude in order to get Christians to read his book and to stand opposed to false teachers who hold a different view of the faith.”²⁶⁸

On James:

*“The real clincher, though, is one we have seen before in relation to both Peter and Jude. This author has written a very fluent and rhetorically effective composition in Greek. He is intimately familiar with the Greek version of the Old Testament. The historical James, on the other hand, was an Aramaic-speaking peasant from Galilee who almost certainly never learned to read. Or if he did learn to read, it was to read Hebrew. If he ever learned Greek, it would have been as a second language in order to speak it, haltingly no doubt. He never would have gone to school. He never would have become proficient in Greek. He never would have learned how to write, even in his native language, let alone a second tongue. He never would have studied the Greek Old Testament. He never would have taken Greek composition classes. He never would have become skilled in Greek rhetoric. This book **was not written** by an illiterate Aramaic-speaking Jew. Whoever wrote it claimed to be James ...”²⁶⁹*

On the Acts of the Apostles:

“But why would the author then speak in the first person on four occasions? Anyone reading this book so far should have no trouble figuring out why. The author is making a claim about himself. He is not naming himself. He is simply claiming to be a traveling companion of Paul’s and therefore unusually well suited to give a “true” account of Paul’s message and mission. But he almost certainly was not a companion of Paul’s. On the one hand, he was writing long after Paul and his companions were dead. Scholars usually date Acts to around 85 CE or so, over two decades after Paul’s death...”²⁷⁰

²⁶⁸ Ibid, pp. 208-209.

²⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 220.

²⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 231.

Fabrications include the following documents:

- The Proto-Gospel of James
- The Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew
- The Infancy Gospel of Thomas.

Modern Forgeries include:

- The Unknown Life of Jesus Christ
- The Crucifixion of Jesus, by an Eye-Witness
- The Death Sentence of Jesus Christ
- The Long-Lost Second Book of Acts

Testimony #23: Wells - Drunk with Blood. God's Killings in the Bible (2013).

The Authors: **Steve Wells**. He is the author of another book: *The Skeptic's Annotated Bible*.

The Book: *Drunk with Blood. God's Killings in the Bible*, SAB Books, 2e (2013).

In this book, the Author documents 158 incidents and acts in the Bible that resulted in the death of a human being. These include either direct killing committed by the God of the Bible, His commands to others to commit the killing, and/or His approval to such acts.

Interestingly, the title of the book “Drunk with Blood” was borrowed from the Bible itself in which the phrase appeared five times:²⁷¹

1. God first uses it to describe himself: his arrows are drunk with blood.
I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh. (Deuteronomy 32:42).
2. God's sword is also drunk with blood, just like his arrows.
This is the day of the Lord GOD of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries: and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiate and made drunk with their blood. (Jeremiah 46:10).

²⁷¹ Wells (2013) - *Drunk with Blood* ..., p. 15.

3. God's sword and arrows won't be the only things drunk with blood. God also plans to force people (before he kills them) to eat their own flesh and get drunk on their own blood.

I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine. (Isaiah 49:26).

4. After God kills people, he will feed their bodies to the birds and beasts until they, too, become drunk with blood.

Thus saith the Lord GOD; Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood. Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth ... And ye shall eat fat till ye be full, and drink blood till ye be drunken, of my sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you. (Ezekiel 39:17-19).

5. And finally, the great whore of Babylon will be drunk with the blood of the saints and martyrs.

I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. (Revelation 17:6).

The Author counted the total number of casualties in those 158 incidents to be 2,821,364 lives (based on the numbers declared in the Bible itself.) However, since many of the incidents did not report how many was killed, he estimates that the total casualties of the killings in the Bible to be 25 million.²⁷²

²⁷² Ibid, p. 212.

The most atrocious killing in the Bible is the Noachian Flood (Genesis 7:21-23):

21. *Every living thing that moved on land perished—birds, livestock, wild animals, all the creatures that swarm over the earth, and all mankind.*
22. *Everything on dry land that had the breath of life in its nostrils died.*
23. *Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out; people and animals and the creatures that move along the ground and the birds were wiped from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark. (Gen. 7:21-23)*

The Bible did not mention how many perished in that flood, but the Author estimates the number to be around 20 Million humans.²⁷³ The number of the animals, the creatures that move on the ground, and the birds that perished in the flood could be in billions.

At the end of the book, a table is included that summarizes the casualties in each of the 158 killings.²⁷⁴

The Book is fun to read, and it demonstrates the extent of the Bible's immorality.

²⁷³ Ibid, pp. 18-19.

²⁷⁴ Ibid, pp. 205-212.

Testimony #24: Muller - Evidence of Editing. Growth and Change of Texts in the Hebrew Bible (2014).

The Authors:

Reinhard Muller is Lecturer in Old Testament Exegesis at the Ludwig-Maximilians University of Munich.

Juha Pakkal is Docent and University Lecturer in Biblical Exegesis and Classical Hebrew at the University of Helsinki.

Bas ter Haar Romeny is Professor of Old Testament and Easter Christianity at Leiden University and Director of the Peshitta Institute.

The Book: *Evidence of Editing. Growth and Change of Texts in the Hebrew Bible*, Soc. Biblical Literature (2014).

In the "Introduction", the Authors state the aim of the book:

"This book seeks to demonstrate that substantial editing took place in the history of the Hebrew Bible. It presents empirical evidence that gives exemplary insight into the editorial processes. The examples show how successive scribes updated the texts to accord with changed historical and social circumstances and with new religious concepts. On the basis of evidence that is collected here it can reasonably be assumed that editorial reworking of the Hebrew Bible continued unabated for centuries before the texts gradually became unchangeable. Their growing religious authority does not seem to have precluded scribes from changing the form, meaning, and content of the texts. On the contrary, for some scribes the religious authority attributed to the texts was reason to update or otherwise improve their wording in order to make sure that no blemish could be found in them. The empirical or documented evidence indicates that editorial modification was the rule rather than the exception, and

accordingly signs of editing can be found in all parts of the Hebrew Bible...²⁷⁵

The Authors select the following 15 examples of editing, growth and change of texts in the Hebrew Bible:

1. Added Detail in the Samaritan Version of Leviticus 17:4 concerning the Sacrifices
2. An Expansion to the Passover Law: Leviticus 23:5-8 and Numbers 28:16-25 Compared
3. From Glosses to Larger Expansions: The Masoretic Text of Numbers 13-14 Compared with the Septuagint and the Samaritan Pentateuch
4. Late Additions or Editorial Shortening? Joshua 20 in the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint.
5. Addition in the Masoretic Text: Judges 6:7-10
6. A Secondary Omission in the Masoretic Text of 1 Samuel 10:1
7. An Addition in a Qumran Manuscript as Evidence for the Continuous Growth of the Text: 1 Samuel 10:27-11:1.
8. Late Addition in the Masoretic Text: 1 Kings 6: 11-14.
9. From Small Additions to Rewriting in the Story about the Burning of Jerusalem.
10. Literary Growth of Gedaliah's Murder in 2 Kings 25:25, Jeremiah 41:1-3 MT, and Jeremiah 48:1-3 LXX.
11. Rewriting Prophecy: Jeremiah 48 Compared with Isaiah 15-16.
12. Evidence of Psalm Composition: Psalm 108 as a Secondary Compilation of Other Psalm Texts.
13. Revision of Ezra-Nehemiah in 1 Esdras: Expansions, Omissions, and Rewritings.
14. Additions in the Book of Esther.

²⁷⁵ Muller, et al (2014) - Evidence of Editing ..., p. 1.

15. Expansions, Relocations, Omissions, and Rewriting: Joash the King and Jehoiada the Priest in 2 Kings 11-12 and 2 Chronicles 22-24.

We then fast forward to the “Conclusions” of the book to read the Authors’ assertion that the Hebrew Bible suffered from substantial editing:

“Fifteen passages from the Hebrew Bible have been investigated in this volume. They show that substantial editing took place in the literary history of the Hebrew Bible. The evidence consists of textual witnesses that differ from the MT and of parallel passages within one textual tradition, especially within the MT. This evidence could be characterized as empirical in the sense that the editorial changes can be observed by comparing two or more preserved textual witnesses or parallel texts. The examples thus provide a solid basis for understanding the general nature of editorial processes. It can reasonably be assumed that similar changes also took place in cases where such evidence is not preserved.

The passages were taken from various parts of the Hebrew Bible in order to gain a broad perspective. Although each text is different and needs to be investigated on the basis of its available textual witnesses, the presented analyses can be used as reference material and potential models for investigating other texts. They provide evidence of a variety of techniques used by the editors. Although it has become apparent that the positions and attitudes of the editors toward the older text were not identical and that different processes have been at work, some clear tendencies of the literary history can be detected in the preserved textual material. With regard to this evidence, the existence and the wide range of editorial processes in the history of the Hebrew Bible should no longer be questioned...”²⁷⁶

²⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 219.

To demonstrate the findings of the Authors we look at this specific case in Leviticus 17:1-4. Here we compare between the MT text and the SP text.²⁷⁷

The MT text:

- 1 *Yhwh spoke to Moses:*
- 2 *"Speak to Aaron and his sons and to all the people of Israel and say to them, 'This is what Yhwh has commanded.*
- 3 *If anyone of the house of Israel slaughters an ox or a lamb or a goat in the camp, or slaughters it outside the camp,*
- 4 *and does not bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting, to present (it) as an offering to Yhwh before the tabernacle of Yhwh, he shall be held guilty of bloodshed; he has shed blood, and he shall be cut off from the people:"*

The SP text:

- 1 *Yhwh spoke to Moses:*
- 2 *"Speak to Aaron and his sons and to all the people of Israel and say to them, 'This is what Yhwh has commanded.*
- 3 *If anyone of the house of Israel slaughters an ox or a lamb or a goat in the camp or slaughters it outside the camp*
- 4 *and does not bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting, to make it a burnt offering or a peace offering to Yhwh. at your own will. for a sweet-smelling savor, and (who) slaughters jt outside. and does not bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting to present it as an offering to Yhwh before the tabernacle of Yhwh, he shall be held guilty of bloodshed; he has shed blood, and he shall be cut off from the people:"*

It is clear from the above, that the SP text contains additional and more-detailed information about the sacrifices, and thereby its content goes beyond the shorter text represented by the MT text.

²⁷⁷ Ibid, pp. 20-21.

After further analysis to the causes of this discrepancy in the above texts, the Authors conclude the following:²⁷⁸

"The textual evidence in Lev 17:1-4 is a prime example of additions that took place in the transmission of the Hebrew Bible. The text was expanded by editors who had a particular perspective, different from that of the older text, and who made additions irrespective of the passage's original idea. In this case, the addition also introduced a disturbing repetition.

The editor was focused on the specific sacrifices and was not primarily concerned about the consequences of his editing for the consistency of the text. Because the original text referred to an ox, lamb, and goat being slaughtered, he wanted to emphasize that these animals were to be offered as a burnt or a peace offering. It is probable that similar additions were made throughout the Pentateuch (as well as other books) for centuries, during periods that are mainly not represented by empirical evidence. It is only in exceptional cases that such additions can be observed and reconstructed on the basis of comparing different witnesses. The textual evidence preserves mainly some of the latest additions that were made to the texts, while the older editorial activity has to be determined by other means, namely literary criticism."

²⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 24.

Testimony #25: Morrow - Three Skeptics and the Bible; Le Peyrère, Hobbes, Spinoza, and the Reception of Modern Biblical Criticism (2016).

The Author: **Jeffrey L. Morrow** is Professor and Chair of the Department of Undergraduate Theology at Immaculate Conception Seminary School of Theology at Seton Hall University. He specializes in the history of biblical interpretation and the history of modern biblical scholarship, as well as the history of the Roman Catholic Modernist controversy.

The Book: *Three Skeptics and the Bible: Le Peyrère, Hobbes, Spinoza, and the Reception of Modern Biblical Criticism*, Pickwick Pub., 2016.

This book objective is to review the origins of biblical criticism in detail. Its task is to reexamine a conventional narrative through the close study of three figures of the seventeenth century who were instrumental in the beginnings of the historical critical method: Isaac La Peyrère, Thomas Hobbes, and Baruch Spinoza.²⁷⁹

The book is composed of the following chapters:

- Introduction
- 1 The Emergence of Modern Biblical Criticism
- 2 The Biblical Criticism of Isaac La Peyrère in Context
- 3 The Biblical Criticism of Thomas Hobbes in Context
- 4 The Biblical Criticism of Baruch Spinoza in Context
- 5 Biblical Hermeneutics and the Creation of Religion
- Conclusion

²⁷⁹ Morrow (2016) - Three Skeptics ..., p. 1.

The three figures under study were chosen for they: *span four religious and denominational boundaries, and they therefore also prove interesting studies: La Peyrère, a French Calvinist who eventually converted to Catholicism; the Anglican Hobbes; and the Jewish Spinoza, who, after being expelled from the synagogue community, found himself lying more in the theological camp of the Dutch Collegiants. Despite their diverse theological backgrounds, they had similar goals and employed similar methods.*²⁸⁰

In Ch. 1, the Author focuses on investigating the historical connection between politics and the biblical criticism which laid the groundwork for later historical biblical criticism. He reminds the reader of the, often neglected, influence of the Muslim philosophers on the development of modern biblical criticism:²⁸¹

“One important, but often neglected, development that helped pave the way for the modern work of historical biblical criticism was the medieval Muslim appropriation of Gnostic, Roman, and Christian polemical literature attacking the Jewish Torah. Ibn Hazm (994–1064) is one of the earliest and most famous examples. He became one of the most important medieval thinkers to use philological analyses and historical arguments to deconstruct traditional Jewish and Christian views of Scripture, particularly regarding historical claims, and to attempt to curb all forms of spiritual interpretation. In his work, “Discerning between Religions, Ideologies, and Sects,” Ibn Hazm employed a host of arguments deconstructing the Jewish Torah as well as the New Testament.”

...

“One of the foundations of his vitriolic barrage was the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. Although this is a commonplace in contemporary scholarship, we must bear in mind that Ibn Hazm was one of the first serious intellectuals to make such a claim; he predates Ibn Ezra

²⁸⁰ Ibid, pp. 3-4.

²⁸¹ Ibid, pp. 12-15.

(1092–1167) by several decades. Although his arguments clearly anticipated what modern scholars now take for granted, and they were sophisticated, based on rigorously philological analysis (most likely of Arabic translations of the texts), Ibn Hazm attacked the idea that Moses wrote the Pentateuch with the purpose of weakening Jewish claims to maintaining any divine revelation. His method of critique sought particularly for apparent contradictions, theological concepts which were untenable for traditional Muslims, and other such infelicities. As Camilla Adang writes, “In this manner Ibn Hazm systematically analyzed the entire Tanakh in search of insupportable propositions.”

“Another key criticism Ibn Hazm leveled against Judaism (and Christianity) was to attack allegorical interpretation. Ibn Hazm was completely opposed to allegorical interpretations, including of the Qur'an and Hadith. Ibn Hazm's arguments critiquing the Hebrew Bible, as well as his other ideas concerning other religious traditions, were adopted by other medieval Muslims, most notably Averroës (Ibn Rushd), and these arguments even entered into Jewish and Christian discourse in the medieval period.

“Averroës, over whom Ibn Hazm exerted a very strong influence, was even more important in the history of modern biblical criticism in that he placed philosophy and reason as judge over faith and theology. More precisely, Averroës maintained a hierarchy of knowers and of knowledge. Averroës was an important and influential commentator on the work of the Greek philosopher Aristotle. He noticed, as had others, that the teachings of the Qur'an were not always consistent with Aristotle's thought. Thus, Averroës reasoned that truth is known differently depending on the different abilities of the one knowing the truth. Philosophers stand at the pinnacle of his hierarchy. What this Averroist notion entailed was the “superiority of the truths of natural reason to those of revelation,” and this led to what has been called the double truth approach of the “Latin Averroist” tradition. This Latin Averroism found an important home at the University of Padua, from whence it spread throughout Europe, becoming especially popular in university systems.”

The Author reviews the contributions of Marsilius of Padua (ca. 1275–ca. 1342), William of Ockham (ca. 1288–ca. 1348), and John Wycliffe (ca. 1330–1384) that led to the growth of biblical criticism. This in turn influenced the writings of the Reformation intellectuals such as: Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527) and his book “*The Prince*,” and Martin Luther (1483–1546) in his letter “*Ninety-Five Theses*.” They were followed by Isaac La Peyrère (ca. 1596–1676) and his book “*Prae-Adamitae and Systema Theologicum*,” Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) and the “*Leviathan*,” Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677.) and his famous “*Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*,” and Richard Simon (1638–1712) and his book “*Histoire critique du Vieux Testament (A Critical History of the Old Testament.)*”

Our first skeptic, Isaac La Peyrère (ca. 1596–1676), is described by the Author in the following:

“... He was a French Calvinist serving as the secretary for the Prince of Condé. At the bequest of Queen Christina of Sweden (Renée Descartes’s patroness), La Peyrère published his controversial *Prae-Adamitae*, which had already circulated widely throughout Europe, and had been criticized in print over a decade before it was itself formally published. La Peyrère’s *Prae-Adamitae* was an attempt to argue that rather than being divine revelation, the Old Testament was in reality just the history of the Jewish people. It appeared to be universal human history, but in reality was mistaken on this account. Adam was simply the ancestor of the Jewish people. The people before Adam, pre-Adamites, were the ancestors of the Gentiles, and importantly, the French. The Old Testament itself was riddled with errors, as one might expect from any ancient historical document. As with Ibn Hazm, La Peyrère challenged the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch in order to undermine any claims that the Pentateuch represented divine revelation. La Peyrère focused his

criticism on repetitions in the text, alleged contradictions, as well as the death of Moses in Deuteronomy...²⁸²

What makes La Peyrère's work so important is the manner in which he built upon the work of others, ultimately forging a path that later biblical critics would follow as they founded the project of modern biblical criticism. La Peyrère is one of the first and most significant intellectuals since the medieval period to call into question the entire Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch; and few thinkers before the eighteenth century did so with as many textual arguments as La Peyrère. La Peyrère's stringent arguments against Mosaic authorship became the origin of modern source criticism.²⁸³

The Author quotes Malcolm who summarizes La Peyrère's arguments against the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch as follows: (1) the mention of "Transjordan" in Deut. 1:1; (2) the death of Moses in Deut. 34; (3) the mention of a new location for the "iron bed" in Deut. 3:11; (4) the phrase "unto this day" throughout Deuteronomy, especially Deut. 34:6; perhaps (5) the apparently anachronistic phrase "as Israel did" in Deut. 2:12; and (6) the mention of the text "book of wars of Lord" in Num. 21:14.²⁸⁴

The Author summarizes La Peyrère's influence on modern biblical criticism in the following:

"La Peyrère's work in biblical exegesis was known to Spinoza, and became very important to Richard Simon, even where Simon disagreed strongly with his friend. Eighteenth-century biblical scholars like Jean Astruc still found themselves responding to what they saw as La Peyrère's corrosive biblical interpretation, and later nineteenth-century

²⁸² Ibid, p. 37.

²⁸³ Ibid, p. 57.

²⁸⁴ Malcolm (2002) - *Aspects of Hobbes*, p. 412.

*historical critics like Wellhausen looked back to La Peyrère as a pioneer in modern biblical scholarship. Thus, although little known today, La Peyrère's work helped set the course modern biblical criticism would travel for over three centuries.*²⁸⁵

Our second skeptic is the English philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), who wrote the *Leviathan*. The Author described him as follows:

*"... In addition to his nearly complete denial of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch based solely on an anemic argument involving three verses (Gen. 12:6; Num. 21:14; Deut. 34:6), Hobbes interpreted the Bible in such a way that no eternal fate was better or worse than what the state sovereign could grant. Hobbes saw the concept of hell as a threat to the security of the state, since such security rested upon the fear of physical death the power of which must lie in the hands of the sovereign."*²⁸⁶

Hobbes proposed a new hermeneutic for Scripture, which he believed was scientific; for the Bible, he maintained, was easy to understand when one is aided by the proper use of reason.²⁸⁷ One noteworthy conclusion reached by Hobbes using his "scientific" method for biblical criticism was that Moses did not write the Pentateuch. While this is commonplace today, it was particularly significant at that time because Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch during the seventeenth century was an important symbol of Church authority as well as of the authority of Christian tradition and the Bible in general.²⁸⁸

The Author summarizes Hobbes lasting influence in the following:

²⁸⁵ Morrow (2016) - Three Skeptics ..., p. 84.

²⁸⁶ Ibid, pp. 38-39.

²⁸⁷ Ibid, p. 91.

²⁸⁸ Ibid, p. 94.

*“Although Hobbes is by no means the first biblical interpreter to separate the Bible from the Church’s tradition of interpretation, nor to suppress the multiple senses of Scripture, he does appear to be one of the first to do all of this under the mantle of “science.” Hobbes’s biblical criticism is part of a modern development, and it is clearly related to modern politics. From an examination of his early political life, the impact of the English Civil War and the Thirty Years’ War on his thought, and the actual biblical discussions woven into the very fabric of Leviathan, we can see how the modern politics which Hobbes created *ad hoc* shaped and gave texture to how he read the Bible. Hobbes thus laid the foundation upon which Spinoza and Richard Simon built, and these latter two figures came to exert a tremendous influence on biblical scholarship up to the present. Together these three figures are generally acknowledged as the founders of modern biblical criticism.”*²⁸⁹

Finally, we have our third skeptic, the Dutch philosopher, Spinoza (1632-1677.) A review of Spinoza’ and his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* is given in Testimony#2. It suffices here to quote the Author’ summary to Spinoza’s contribution:

*“Through his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, which he shrewdly published anonymously, Spinoza was able to attack several battlefronts at the same time. His evisceration of the Torah and his exaltation of the New Testament and of Jesus in place of Moses, as well as his stringent critique of Maimonides, the Pharisees (a slightly less-than-veiled reference to Spinoza’s Jewish contemporaries), Spinoza was able to exact revenge on the Jewish community that excommunicated him. His evisceration of the Torah, and his more heavily veiled critique of Christian dogma and New Testament history, as well as his overt dismissals of Roman Catholic papal authority, struck out both against the Catholic Church and Catholic lands who had threatened to control the Netherlands in the not-so-distant*

²⁸⁹ Ibid, p. 103.

*past, as well as against the Calvinist orthodoxy which threatened to take tyrannical control of the Dutch Republic and perhaps convert it into a new Geneva. Finally, his more subtle critique of Maimonides and his comments on philosophy could be taken as pedagogical or collegial jabs at his intellectual sparring partners and comrades in philosophical arms, the Collegiants, Quakers, and other heterodox Protestants with whom he exchanged ideas, especially Meyer.*²⁹⁰

²⁹⁰ Ibid, p. 133.

Epilogue:

The works of 25 scholars are reviewed in this book. These scholars are introduced as witnesses to give their testimonies in the three lawsuits against the Bible: (1) Criticism of the Bible's Authorship, (2) Criticism of the Bible's Integrity, and (3) Criticism of the Bible's Morality.

The table below shows the relevance of each testimony to the cases at hand. As can be seen in the table, some of the testimonies are relevant to more than one case.

#	Testimony	Case 1 Authorship	Case 2 Integrity	Case 3 Morality
1	Ibn Ezra (1164)	X		
2	Spinoza (1670)	X		
3	Newton (1754)		X	
4	Horne (1844)		X	
5	De Wette (1850)	X	X	
6	Colenso (1862)	X	X	
7	Doane (1882)		X	
8	Ingersoll (1889)		X	X
9	Gladden (1891)	X		
10	Stanton (1895)			X
11	Burgon (1896)		X	
12	Hull (1900)	X		
13	Remsburg (1907)	X	X	X
14	West (1923)			X
15	Sunderland (1924)	X	X	
16	Wheless (1930)	X	X	
17	Ehrman (1993)		X	
18	Kirsch (1997)			X
19	Dundes (1999)		X	
20	Thompson (1999)		X	
21	Friedman (2011)	X		

22	Ehrman (2011)	X		
23	Wells (2013)			X
24	Muller (2014)		X	
25	Morrow (2016)	X	X	

On the average, every testimony (book) is reviewed in about 6-8 pages. However, there are some exceptions. The book written by Colenso, *"The Pentateuch and Book of Joshua Critically Examined"*, for example, is a monumental work that is composed of 5 volumes with a total of 1,600 pages. Its review deserved extra few pages.

The books that are reviewed here belong to the academic genres. A review to such a book is just an invitation to read the whole book to examine the details of the book's ideas, data, postulates, analysis, arguments, proofs, and results.

This book is the first part of a continuing endeavor. More similar testimonies will be reviewed in future parts.

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Other Books in the Field of “Religion”:

- *Biblical Creation vs. Qur'anic Creation* (2020).
- *The Morality and Ethics of the Bible and the Qur'an*, Updated & Revised Edition (2021).